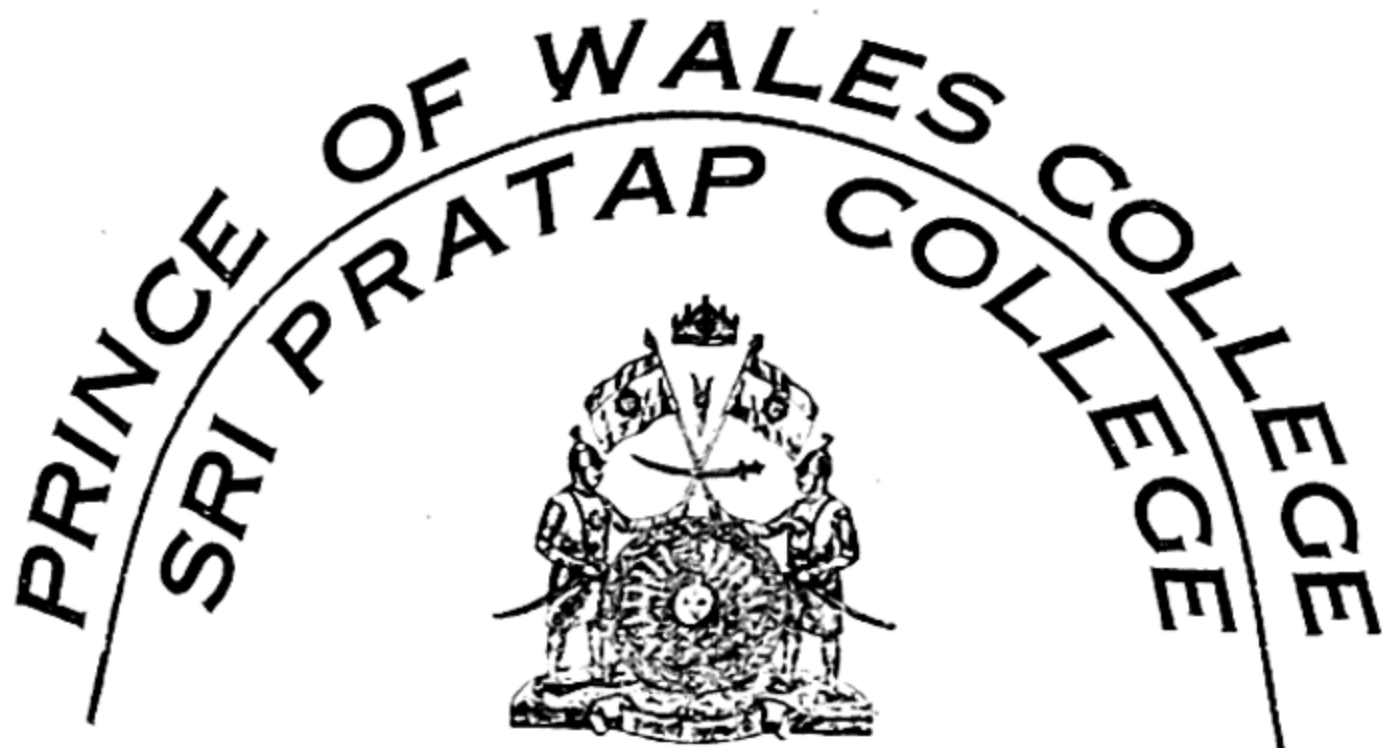


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# THE LEGENDS OF VIKRAMADITYA.

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By

**P. V. Jagadisa Ayyar**

*Author of South Indian Festivities, South Indian.*

*Shrines, Mattavilasam &c. &c.*

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The plot of ground where Vikrama's throne remained buried had become the property of a Brahmin named Saravana Battar of Tondaimandalam country and was being cultivated by him.

On one occasion, King Bhoja with his retinue, tired out after a long hunting, came there. The Brahmin was at the time in a loft built over the spot under which Vikrama's throne remained buried. As he was in a sense seated on the throne of Vikrama, he was momentarily endowed with the virtues of King Vikrama.

Hailing from the loft he told Bhoja and his followers that they might make themselves comfortable and enjoy his garden produce as if it were their own.

When he came down from the loft his behaviour was quite the reverse and he proved himself a selfish miser abusing the King and his followers as unwelcome trespassers upon private property.

Filled with surprise at this strange conduct of the Brahmin, King Bhoja bought the piece of land, dug the loft and brought the throne into his palace.

The throne had thirty-two steps each guarded

by an effigy. How Vikrama came into its possession is an interesting study.

During the reign of Vikramaditya, when that mighty prince was ruling over his vast empire with an uncommon administrative ability and when the splendour of his capital, Ujjain, cast all other cities into shade, he was sent for by Indra to his celestial court to decide about the comparative merits of the two celestial damsels named Rambha and Urvasi.

To find out which of the two was better and at ease in exertion of dancing, Vikrama managed to present both the dancers balls of flowers with insects like scorpion kept concealed within, to be held in their hands while dancing.

A born dancer, Urvasi held the ball lightly in her hands while Rambha held it tight. While Urvasi completed her dance without even being conscious of the existence of the ball of flowers in her hand, Rambha got stung in her hands by the insects concealed within the ball of flowers many times which resulted in her losing the proper measure often.

Indra, pleased with Vikrama's intelligence and his device to find out the natural and artifi-

cial dancers, presented him with this throne and sent him back to his kingdom.

To resume the thread of our narration, when Bhoja attempted to occupy the throne the effigies prevented him saying that he was not fit to occupy it as he was lacking in the several virtues possessed by its previous owner Vikrama !!

Moved by intense curiosity, Bhoja asked each one of the effigies each one on each day, how Vikrama was more virtuous than himself and they each in their turn narrated one by one all his adventures in detail. These narratives give us some idea at least of the conditions of the time of Vikrama and Bhoja.

Thus we find in the sketches of the life and adventures of Vikrama not only a thesis on morals but also certain facts from which social life of the periods can be deduced.

An attempt has been made to give here a brief and interesting sketch of Vikrama's adventures as recorded in some of the works in Sanskrit and Tamil.

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King Vikrama by his skill gets the boon to rule long.

# THE LEGENDS OF VIKRAMADITYA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HOW UJJAIN CAME TO BE FOUNDED.

In the city of Nandyapura there lived a Brahmin named Chandranama. He was versed in all the literature of the time and was considered a very wise man by one and all. He had four sons and two of them renounced the world and became recluses. The third named Vikrama became the ruler of Kanyapuri which his father had inherited from his father-in-law Sudhavarman. He made his half-brother Batti his minister and with his aid had a splendid city erected which he named Ujjain-Makali. History has it that the city was completed by King Vikrama after having obtained the divine grace of the Goddess Kali and it was therefore dedicated to her and named after her. After having removed his capital to the new city, he ruled there

having extended his kingdom far and wide. From his tutelary deity, he obtained a boon to rule over cities for a thousand years ! His minister Batti who had contrived to obtain a boon to live for two thousand years hit upon a stratagem whereby his King may be made to live for two thousand years instead of a thousand years only as blessed by the Goddess Kali !! The boon conferred on the King was that he would rule over cities for a thousand years. If the King made it a rule to rule over cities for six months in a year and spend the remaining six months in forests protecting sages and seeking adventures, he might double the life-period assigned for him by Kali !! This ingenious stratagem was at once to be put into practice, since there were only a few months left to complete the first half of the year in which cities were to be personally ruled over by the King. During this short period an incident occurred which enabled him to manifest his prowess and strength of will. What he did and the advantages gained by him in this adventure of his we will reserve for the ensuing chapter.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE TRAPPER TRAPPED.

One morning while King Vikrama was holding his Court surrounded by his wise ministers and other able counsellors, there came to him a *Muni* named Gyanasila. He was a man highly ambitious and a devotee of Kali to boot. He had performed a mighty sacrifice invoking the presence of Kali. When she appeared before him and asked him what he wanted, he had prostrated before her and asked her to help him to rule in place of Vikrama after having gained mastery over and enslaved a Vampire of intense ability and skill, hanging head over heels from the branch of a tree near a crematorium where he has performing his daily penance.

Kali had told him in reply that on his offering at her altar the sacrifice of a hundred crowned Kings, his object would be fulfilled, and disappeared. He had already cut off the heads of ninety-nine crowned Kings to please Kali and win her favour. He had chosen Vikrama for the last victim. He should move



in the matter very carefully and cunningly ; else instead of making him the victim, he might himself become one since Vikrama was not like the other kings whom he had sacrificed before Kali. He was not only very shrewd but also very strong and daring. If he were to see through his game, he would surely be lost.

Thinking thus and hiding his dark intention behind a benevolent smile he approached Vikrama, laid at his feet a pomegranate fruit and departed. Accustomed as he was to receive fruits of various kinds as presents from his subjects, the king did not attach any importance to this incidence. But since the *Muni* was repeating this practice day after day for many days, the King wanted to ascertain who he was and what he was coming to him for. Another incident had occurred which pricked the king's curiosity.

The fruit presented by the *Muni* on that day fell down and broke and lo ! it was found to contain not pulpy seeds but priceless rubies !! The other fruits that had been presented by him were also examined and they too contained fine diamonds !!!

The next day, when the *Muni* came to him

as usual and presented him the fruit, the King bade him take his seat near him and asked him who he was and what he wanted.

“Listen, Oh Vikrama ! I am a *Muni* and my name is Gyanasila. I have an object in view in visiting you. If you give me your promise to satisfy my whim, whatever it might prove to be, I would feign unfold my projects to you and tell you what I want of you,” said the *Muni*.

King Vikrama gave the promise required of him and thereupon Gyanasila spoke as follows :—

“Oh mighty King Vikrama, listen. I am performing a sacrifice in front of the temple of Kali in the forest adjoining this city. The preliminaries have been gone through and the rites are to be concluded on the ensuing fourth night after the new-moon night. I would like to see you there on that night alone and unattended. When you meet me, I shall put you in possession of more particulars and tell you what more I require of you.”

Of a brave and adventurous disposition, the King readily consented to be present in the forest at the appointed hour little suspecting the treacherous intentions of the *Muni* who took

his departure <sup>smiling</sup> chuckling with delight at the success of his plan.

True to his promise, King Vikrama, alone and unattended, met the *Muni* in the forest who welcomed him all beaming with smiles. He was then told by the *Muni* what was wanted of him. There was a Vampire hanging head over heels from the branch of a particular tree near by. It would be mastered by none but a brave king like Vikrama. If he would bring it to him well bound he would be highly obliged. The *Muni* would then require of Vikrama a very slight service after which he might return to his palace.

The adventure, proposed by the *Muni*, suited the brave Vikrama's bold spirit and he forthwith departed in quest of the Vampire. Ere long he reached the spot described by the *Muni* and came to the tree from a branch of which the mighty Vampire was hanging head over heels. He quickly climbed up and easily caught it and made it a prisoner. Coming down from the tree he was hastening towards the *Muni* carrying the prisoner on his back, when lo ! it gave him the slip in a miraculous manner as soon as a story which it wanted the

wonderful  
Shes

King to listen to was completed, ran to the tree and remained hanging there as before !! The King again made it a prisoner and it again escaped to resume his position on the tree at the conclusion of another story.

Vikrama had to catch and imprison the Vampire twenty-three times, listen to twenty-three of its stories and give his opinion on them. When he caught it for the twenty-fourth time and listened to its twenty-fourth story on which he said he had no opinion to offer, the Vampire did not attempt to escape. It acknowledged Vikrama as its lord and promised to serve him faithfully. It told him that the stories narrated by it were the stories narrated to the God of the temple at Tirichirapuram (Trichinopoly) in Chola country, to his consort in secrecy.

It was a Brahmin priest in that temple when the stories were being narrated there. As he had <sup>disclosed</sup> divulged the stories to his wife, he was condemned by God to lead the life of a Vampire, to serve Vikrama for two thousand years and eventually regain the original status lost by his foolish act.

The nefarious plot laid by the *Muni* to

*Success*

*12/12/24*



offer Vikrama as a sacrifice to the Goddess was also divulged to him by the Vampire and on whose advice the *Muni* was offered as a sacrifice to Kali by the King. Blessed by Kali he returned to his kingdom with the newly acquired Vampire-servant and told his faithful Batti all his adventures. As the time for leading the six months' life in forests had come, he was about to set out from his Capital accompanied by his faithful Vampire-servant, leaving the kingdom in charge of his brother and minister Batti. At this juncture a Brahmin with tears in his eyes came to him with the news that his seven years old child was swallowed by a huge sea-fish, and that if the child was not restored to him he would put an end to his existence. The King comforted him, saying that he would see that his wrong is righted and that the child snatched from him is restored to him. Taking the Brahmin also with him, he set out for the forest on the back of his Vampire. How the Brahmin was helped and his child was restored to him will be found described in the next chapter.

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Sacrifice to Kali of human heads.

Be like a Vikrama  
and help the men.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE RECOVERY OF THE LOST CHILD.

In the bygone days of Vikrama of happy memory, the people did not die young. Everyone lived to a good old age and died. If any premature death took place at all, it was attributed to the bad administration of the ruler.

So Vikrama, feeling that he was bound to restore to the Brahmin his lost boy, told him to show the particular spot where his boy was swallowed up by the fish. When that was pointed out to him, he bade the Brahmin go back promising to restore him his son in the course of six months.

After the Brahmin had departed he seated himself there and began to pray to his tutelary deity the Goddess Kali for help. Shortly after, a huge fish came swimming towards him and swallowed him up.

When he reached the animal's stomach, the King found himself standing in the street of a splendid city ! Proceeding along it, he came to a green where a number of boys were playing. One of them looked like a Brahmin boy. The

King called him aside and asked him who he was. He told him in reply that he was the son of the very Brahmin to help whom he had come there.

Delighted at the speedy success of his undertaking, Vikrama took the boy by the hand and was going along the street. He noticed a stir among the people which he considered must be unusual. He hailed a passer-by and asked him what the stir and commotion among the people were about. He told him in reply that the princess of that city was going to choose her husband from among the kings and princes assembled there for the purpose.

Here was a chance for Vikrama to win a princess and he was not going to let it slip through his fingers.

Entrusting the Brahmin boy to the care of the land-lady of a house that was near, after having paid her a sufficient sum of money for the purpose, he chose a shady spot near the palace and seated himself there. He then prayed to Kali for help, when lo ! there was a blanket spread before him whereon was arranged in tiny heaps gems of different varieties of rare quality and high value. He had in fact become a



jeweller dealing in precious stones for the nonce.

Soon a crowd gathered round him consisting mainly of the kings and princes who had come there to try their luck in winning the hands of the princess.

A past master in the art of winning the hearts of men, Vikrama had no difficulty in keeping these near him and thus thwart the aim of the king to secure a bridegroom for his daughter. The kings and princes did not go to the palace at the hour appointed to enable the princess to choose her husband from among them. On the other hand they remained talking with Vikrama about his gems and accepting gifts of them at his hands.

The news of this state of affairs was at last brought to the king who was waiting for the arrival of the princes and kings. He forthwith repaired to the place where the merchant was surrounded by the admiring members of the various royal families. He requested all of them to go with him to the palace, the merchant included. There the princess was waiting to put the garland round the neck of the one whom she might choose for her husband.

When all had taken their seats, the princess went round examining the faces of the assembled kings and princes to see if any one would suit her taste. She passed all of them by and at last came to the merchant Vikrama. Fascinated by his beauty and royal appearance, she at once fell in love with him, and chose him for her husband by placing the garland, she carried, round his neck.

All the assembled princes and kings and the bride's father even thought that the princess was mad to choose an unknown merchant in preference to many famous kings and princes. But she said that she knew better and desired the marriage ceremony to be gone through. Finally when it was known who the merchant really was, there was, surprise and wonder everywhere.

As Vikrama was the most famous and powerful of the then ruling princes and chiefs, they all hastened to do homage to him and to grace the occasion of his marriage with the princess by their presence.

After a short stay with his father-in-law, King Vikrama took leave of him and departed for his country accompanied by his newly-

wedded wife. He took the Brahmin boy with him, after having liberally rewarded the people who had charge of him and restored him to his father whose delight knew no bounds.

His return was welcomed by one and all and he assumed the charge of his Government. He narrated the history of his adventures to his ministers and introduced his new bride to his friends and relations. For a long time there was no talk in the country but about the beauty and grace of the queen and the merit of their King Vikrama, whom we would leave in the enjoyment of domestic felicity to meet again in his second adventure to be recorded in the ensuing chapter.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MAN-HATING PRINCESS.

The period of six months' stay in his Capital city being over, Vikrama departed from it in quest of adventures. This time he took his minister Batti also with him. His famous Vampire was always with him. They journeyed on for some days, halting now in one place and then in another, meeting nothing worthy of their attention. At last one day tired with long walk they halted to take rest in a wayside building in the midst of a fine garden. The tank in it was full of aquatic flowers blue, rosy and white. The scenery was delightful and the trio were admiring it. Then they became conscious of a delightful fragrance and thought that it must be emanating from the *Shampaka* flowers blooming there. The King sent his minister Batti to procure for him a few. He searched everywhere in the garden for the plant but could not find even a trace of it anywhere. So he returned to the King and said that the fragrance did not come from any flowers in the garden.

They were naturally surprised at this and hence hailed a passer-by and asked him if he could enlighten them on the point. He said in reply that the mansion in the garden belonged to the king of that country and was resorted to by his daughter Shanbagam to while away a few hours playing there with her companions. Once a week on Friday she used to go over there and the fragrance they enjoyed was nothing but the odour emanating from her body and with which the air remained saturated for a long time even after she had left.

As the princess in question was averse to the presence of males near her, she had only women servants about her. The mansion they rested in was prohibited to any male members and consequently they would do well to quit it immediately lest they be caught by the minions of the princess and punished. With these words he departed leaving our Vikrama and his minister Batti a thinking.

The King at last broke the silence and said, "Oh Batti ! Here we have at last an adventure worthy of our undertaking ! Fain would I wed this princess averse to the society of men but radiating sweet fragrance from her body which

is truly enchanting! What procedure would you suggest to crown our attempt with success?"

"Listen, Oh king, to what I here narrate and decide as to what is fit to be done," said the minister. "Some time back, I was resting near the banks of a river under the spreading branches of a banyan tree. A *Rishi* came there to bathe. When he saw me, he approached me. I pretended that I was asleep. It appears that he was struck with my beauty and consequently feared that his wife might fall in love with me if she were to see me! So he took a root from his bag and touched me with it, when lo! I was changed into a beautiful damsel! After his departure I was lying there thinking of the way to get my original form, when lo! who would come there but the *Rishi's* wife! I closed my eyes and pretended to be asleep once more.

When the woman saw me, she thought that her husband might fall in love with me were he to see me. So she took another root, touched me with it, changed me into a man once again and departed!!

The jealousy of this couple has put me in possession of two kinds of roots one of which can change a man into a woman and the other

a woman into a man! As access to this princess is denied to males we may become women for the nonce and approach her.

So saying Batti handed the two roots to the King.

The next morning they two went to the king's palace, Batti in the guise of a foreign prince and Vikrama as his wife. The king received them kindly and at the request of the prince permitted his wife to be a companion for his daughter till his return from a pilgrimage he had to undertake.

Time passed and the companion 'Vikrama' of the Princess Shanbagam, by her fascinating manners, won her affection completely. She would never lose sight of her newly-found friend. Separation from her she would not brook even for a few hours.

Meanwhile we will follow Batti and see what he has been doing. By a peculiar gift he had from the Goddess Kali, he could take the form of any animal he chose! After leaving the King's Court he took the form of a squirrel and was very near the Princess and Vikrama.

Thoroughly convinced that the acquaintance of Vikrama and the Princess had developed into

intimate friendship, he thought that it was high time to play the last part to win the Princess for Vikrama in marriage.

The very next day, he cast off his squirrel's body and was in his own self once more. He approached the king as if he had just returned from his long pilgrimage. He was of course welcomed and his wife was restored to him.

When the time for parting arrived, the grief of the Princess knew no bounds. She was, however, consoled by the promise from Vikrama that they might meet often and let her friend depart with her husband.

A few days afterwards Vikrama and Batti were once more before the king in characters quite different. Vikrama was a prince who despised women and avoided their presence. Batti was his dear friend. The king was pleased with these and desired them to live in the palace. There in course of time Vikrama and the Princess were brought together at first as vehement despisers of each other. Then they began to tolerate each other which sentiment in course of time ripened into love.

When the old king came to know of his daughter's attachment to Vikrama his joy knew



no bounds. Grand arrangements were made to celebrate the marriage and in an auspicious hour Vikrama married this princess, the despiser of males of a short time ago. After the marriage, the identity of Vikrama and Batti were disclosed and there was wonder and joy everywhere.

Meanwhile the period of six months' life away from the capital city being over, Vikrama with his wife, Batti and the Vampire reached his Capital and assumed the reigns of his Government.

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## CHAPTER V

### CHARACTER AND WEALTH

The six months' city life was passed and Vikrama and Batti with the Vampire accompanying them went abroad seeking adventures. Shortly they came to a place where two roads branched off, one to the east and the other to the west. It was decided after a short deliberation that Batti should go towards the east while King Vikrama and the Vampire proceeded by the path leading towards the west. Leaving Batti on his way to a city, we will follow Vikrama in his wanderings.

He shortly came to a large city and took up his abode at a public inn. There he learned that two maidens of exquisite beauty lived in that city. One of them was named Dhana-vathi, because of her immense wealth while the other was called Gunavathi, because of her character, which was highly praiseworthy. Any one was at liberty to make love to them paying an advance of a thousand gold coins. His success or failure depended on how he

acquitted himself in his attempts at winning them.

Vikrama thought that here was an opportunity for him to go after adventures and decided upon his course of action forthwith.

He first went to the mansion of Dhanavathi in the guise of a venerable *Sanyasi* of advanced years. The thousand gold coins were duly paid and the *Sanyasi* was brought face to face with Dhanavathi. She was <sup>excited</sup> exasperated at the <sup>insolence</sup> impudence of the old fellow in making advances to her, the emblem of youth and beauty. In return for the thousand gold pieces, our hero received some hard blows and abusive languages in plenty. Rewarded with these he was thrust out and the door was slammed in his face. *clock (by Ranting on page 100)*

Finding his love suit thus summarily and ignominiously disposed of, King Vikrama beat a hasty retreat from there to avoid undue attraction and resolved to try his luck in the other quarter, to wit, in trying to win the love of Gunavathi who was said to be at least equal in beauty to Dhanavathi though not more beautiful. Here his attempts were successful. When Gunavathi heard of the arrival of the



decrepit *Sanyasi* she somehow felt no repugnance for him. Something within told her that her suitor was not what he appeared to be. Old and consumptive people like him never went about love-making. She thought, since this *Rishi* chose to do so and had brought the thousand gold pieces, there must be some secret motive. Thinking thus she received the suitor kindly and attended to his comforts.

Vikrama was deeply touched by her kindness towards him. He told her that an old and consumptive like him may not be a welcome visitor there. If so, he said that he would take his instant departure.

Gunavathi said in reply that she was greatly honoured by the preference shown by such a holy personage. She would esteem it a privilege to wait upon him. As it was a great pleasure for her to attend to him and look to his comforts, he might pass his days under her roof free from any anxiety and care.

Thus addressed, King Vikrama was passing his days happily in the company of Gunavathi.

Meanwhile Dhanavathi, after she had driven the old *Sanyasi*, felt apprehensive that he

might make a complaint to the king. So she sent one of her minions to dog his footsteps and inform her of his actions.

The reception of the *Sanyasi* by Gunavathi was duly communicated to Dhanavathi by her servants. As she was not in good terms with Gunavathi, she thought that this act of hers furnished her with a suitable opportunity to taunt her before others and put her to shame.

Both these maidens used to attend the King's Court. One day in the presence of the whole Court Dhanavathi insulted Gunavathi and the latter did not fail to retort.

The king had to interfere and pacify them both. But Dhanabathi was purse proud and wanted to prove her superiority over her rival Gunavathi. With this end in view, she presented the king with a costly necklace thinking that Gunavathi would not be in a position to do any such thing as she was very poor. Yet with the help of her *Sanyasi* she was able to present to the king a garland of emeralds of rare quality and great value.

Dhanavathi was surprised at this resource of Gunavathi who, she thought, would be cowed

down by the splendour of her wealth. She guessed that the gift ought to have emanated from the *Sanyasi*. He might have had only this garland and another trick of hers would nonplus Gunavathi and the *Sanyasi* to boot.

She would entertain the king and his retinue royally and see if her rival Gunavathi could do the same. Surely this would be beyond her power to accomplish, nor would the *Sanyasi*, a stranger to the place, be in a position to help her.

The plan was accordingly laid. The king and his retinue were invited and magnificently entertained by Dhanavathi. No pain and money were spared to make the attempt a perfect success.

When the feast was over and the king and his followers had taken their departure, Dhana-  
bathi sent a challenge to Gunavathi to entertain the king as she had done or to confess that she was beaten. Loath to do, the latter Gunavathi accepted the challenge. When the *Sanyasi* noticed her pensive and thoughtful look, he asked her what had transpired. She told him of Dhanavathi's challenge and her acceptance of the same. He again asked her as



King Vikrama before the Muni engaged in a sacrifice before a Kali temple.

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king and his retinue, making that of hers pale into insignificance her jealousy knew no bounds. She would make Gunavathi her slave or perish in the attempt if need be.

Her plan was accordingly laid. A few miles from her city, there was a town and there lived a maiden named the "Silent Princess." She had a palatial residence approach to which was not possible to ordinary people. Her ingenuity had devised various traps and dangers to turn away the unwary suitors to her hand. She would no doubt marry him who might reach her boudoir overcoming the impediments and difficulties purposely placed in his way to test his intelligence, strength and presence of mind. Mere reaching her boudoir was not enough to win her hand. He should also make her speak thrice in the course of the day and night of the trial.

Many had made attempts but none had succeeded. One and all of them had to beat an ignominious retreat, unable to understand the mechanism of even the simplest of the traps set on their way.

'It would be a fun indeed if the patron *Sanyasi* of Gunavathi is prevailed upon to



go there to return loaded with shame. Perhaps *her* lover the Brahmin may be able to achieve what this *Sanyasi* may fail to effect.'

Thus mused Dhanavathi and with her mind revolving on this new scheme of hers she reached the king's palace where, as she had expected, Gunavathi also was present.

In the course of her conversation with the king, she dilated upon the merits of her Brahmin lover and said that he could win the "Silent Princess." If he failed none could succeed.

So skillfully did she manage the conversation that Gunavathi was unwillingly drawn into it and was forced to say that her *Sanyasi* could effect anything.

This admission was all that Dhanavathi desired to elicit from the mouth of her rival Gunavathi. She forthwith told the king that her Brahmin would be sent to win the love of the "Silent Princess." If he did not succeed and Gunavathi's *Sanyasi* did, then she would become the maid-servant of her rival.

The challenge was thrown and duly accepted by Gunavathi. Returning home she was in a

*brown-study* which attracted her *Sanyasi's* attention.

When what transpired in the presence of the king was told him, he bade her have no anxiety on that account. He would win the "Silent Princess" and come back to her to enable her to put her rival to deep humiliation.

Meanwhile, the Brahmin sent by Dhanavathi returned with a head-shorn of all hair in discomfiture and shame. Of course he paid the amount to the accountant of the "Silent Princess," and was admitted to the first test. Not understanding what was required of him he entered a chamber on the way where he was held firm in a chair by certain effigies controlled by a secret mechanism while others disfigured him and put him to disgrace !!!

Dhanavathi of course upbraided him for his want of skill and told Gunavathi that she might have her chance, admitting her failure.

The *Vikrama-Sanyasi*, accompanied by Batti and his favourite Vampire, thereupon set out for the city where the "Silent Princess" dwelt. Arriving there they lodged in the house of an old woman and gleaned from her all particulars available regarding the "Silent

*proceed  
Sanyasi*

Princess" and the tests they had to go through to win her.

Presenting themselves before the accountant, they counted down the requisite amount of money and passed on to the chamber containing the first test. There they were served with food cooked and uncooked. Batti advised the king to partake of the cooked things while he took possession of the uncooked rice, vegetables and flesh.

Then they passed on to the entrance of the second chamber, accompanied by the accountant and his groom.

Batti watching for the opportune moment pushed the groom into the chamber where the effigies at once held him firm and shaved off the hair on his head !

Meanwhile Batti and others passed on to the entrance to the next chamber. Arriving there, the accountant was pushed in by Vikrama whom the two effigy wrestlers began to belabour without mercy while the party passed on.

In the fourth chamber they found a black monkey to which Batti threw the uncooked vegetables. As it did not eat them, they under

stood that it was not a real monkey. So with the aid of the Vampire it was destroyed.

Then they came to the two chambers one containing a tiger and the other an elephant. Both of these were disposed of in the manner similar to that of the monkey.

In the next chamber there was a well and they had to cross it. The intelligent Batti pushed a stone that was there into it which effected a bridge over the well to cross it.

Then there was a room full of sticky mud. Wrapping pieces of oil cloth round their legs they crossed it.

In the next chamber there was a tiny cup of water. With only one half of the quantity, the king should wash his feet clean.

With a dry palmyra leaf that was there, he scraped off the mud and hence was able to wash his feet clean using his kerchief, even with less than half the quantity of water and pass on.

The floor of the next chamber was of polished marble. So one had to be very careful in crossing the slippery passage in it. The "Silent Princess" had expected that the unwary suitor for her hand would, when

attempting to cross it, fall down and break his head.

Vikrama with the help of his Vampire procured fire and wax. Melting the latter in the former and applying it to his feet he was able to pass through this chamber unhurt.

The next impediment he had to pass through was a very dark passage full of pillars everywhere. One attempting to cross it should take a zig-zag course. The unwary would surely knock his head against one of the pillars and die.

The Vampire assuming the form of a bee flew before Vikrama along the zig-zag path humming. Guided by the humming noise Vikrama was able to cross this passage and emerge on the other side. He then reached an anti-chamber where a maid-servant was waiting.

He sent word by her to the "Silent Princess" that he had arrived there having overcome the obstacles and would be obliged if she would favour him with her presence.

The maid, filled with astonishment since no one till then had reached so far, ran in haste to her mistress with the news.



When the "Silent Princess" heard of it she was filled with apprehension. She felt that the days of her maidenhood had passed and the new-comer would surely win her. But her companion the old lady comforted her, saying, "My dear ! It is not so very bad, as you seem to think. This fellow who has come thus far may yet be sent back in disgrace. He should make you speak thrice before sunrise to win you and I think he will not succeed in doing it. Further you need not go to him at all since one of your friends might as well take your place. This fool may not be able to distinguish between the "Silent Princess" and her charming maid-servant."

This view of her old nurse tickled the fancy of the "Silent Princess" who, acting upon the advice given, sent one of her maids dressed in her fine costumes and jewels.

Meanwhile, Vikrama passed into an inner chamber and found there a beautiful couch made of ivory, mother of pearls and precious gems. When he was going to take his rest on it awaiting the arrival of the princess, Batti stopped him. He advised him to compare it



with another exactly like it on the other side and decide which one was intended for the suitor before lying down upon it. Further he should find the side of the couch intended for the head and that intended for the feet. He suspected some trick in the arrangement and mechanism of the cot to trap the unwary. Since there were two cots placed there purposely, one should be intended for the male and the other for the female. They should discover which was intended for the male visitor.

The key for solving this question lay perhaps in the ivory composing the cot. He thought that the one formed for the use of males should offer more resistance than the other. The test was duly applied and the right cot was selected. There was still the difficulty of discovering and distinguishing the top from the bottom. Batti took a lime fruit from his pocket and placed it in the middle of the cot. It rolled down one side proving that side to be the bottom. Having found out the right cot and how to lie down on it the king mounted upon it, and desired to take rest. Then a most wonderful thing took place.

A number of effigies sprang up from the inner mechanism of the cot. One fanned him with a fan. Another gently pressed his feet. A third offered him folded *pan* leaves and scented nuts, while a fourth held a nosegay of sweet smelling flowers near him so that he might enjoy the fragrance.

Vikrama thought that the difficulties undergone by him till then were at least partly compensated for by this luxury and pleasure.

Meanwhile the maid-servant of the Princess decked in the ornaments of her mistress and looking ravishingly beautiful came into the room and approached king Vikrama.

Forewarned by his minister Batti, Vikrama had his suspicion that the "Silent Princess" might not come herself, but send some one in her stead to bamboozle him and send him away.

So, he asked his Vampire whether she was the princess or some one stimulating her. He told in reply that to find out who she really was, he would adopt a strategem. He would push the wick in a lamp down. If she were the real princess, she would, on setting it right, wipe her fingers in a bit of cloth. If she were her maid she would wipe her fingers on the hair

of her head. The king would then be able to know who she was and act accordingly.

The plan was adopted and put into practice. The false princess wiped her oily fingers on her head showing thereby who she really was. The king thereupon sent her back to her mistress with the message that all attempts at deceiving him would be of no avail. *perplexed vizigendak*

Though non-plussed by the failure of this trick of hers, the "Silent Princess" on the advice of her aged relative sent her cook in her stead this time. When she walked into the chamber occupied by Vikrama with a bewitching smile and dazzling beauty, he did not allow himself to be taken in.

The Vampire had to upset a dish of *ghee* this time to find out who she was. The *false* princess instead of procuring fresh *ghee* skimmed *he* into the dish what was *spilt* on the ground. *turn* This made it easy for Vikrama to understand that she was the cook.

So he told her bluntly to go into the kitchen and attend to her duties after having told her mistress that her presence and not that of any others was required by him.

When the "Silent Princess" heard of the

Failure of this plot also, she did not know what to do. At last, accompanied by her companion—the old lady—and many maid-servants of surpassing beauty, she came to the room where Vikrama was seated.

The old lady addressing Vikrama spoke as follows :—

“Listen, Oh King ! My friend had succeeded till now in thwarting the attempts of many scions of noble families at winning her. To-day you have advanced thus far overcoming innumerable obstacles. Now the last condition you have to fulfill before claiming her love is to make her speak thrice before dawn. If you succeed in doing it, she would of course be yours. If you fail, you will have to leave this place quietly. Any attempt at violence before fulfilling the terms would result in your death.”

Having addressed the king thus, the old lady drew a curtain between the bed on which Vikrama was seated and that intended for the princess, and retired from the chamber with all the maids.

Neither spoke for some time. At last the king fearing that the night might pass without his making the princess speak thrice if he

delayed, made his Vampire pass into the curtain and converse with him !!

When Vikrama addressed the curtain, saying, "Oh curtain ! I have to pass a tedious night. The "Silent Princess" would not talk. There is none else here with whom I might talk and while away the time. So you at least would take pity on me and tell me a story." It began to talk to the intense surprise and astonishment of the "Silent Princess." When it narrated a wonderful story and Vikrama purposely made a foolish comment on it at the end, she lost control over herself and said that the comment was wrong. Thus she lost one point out of the three in this last game of hers.

The king then made his Vampire enter the various articles in the chamber and narrate stories as if they emanated from them. At the conclusion of each story, a comment was forced out of the "Silent Princess." She lost her game and surrendered herself to Vikrama saying that a hero like him was far above the highest ambition she could ever entertain and hence in losing her maidenhood, she had gained what she might never have gained.

Accompanied by the "Silent Princess," Batti,



and his favourite Vampire, Vikrama returned to Gunavathi.

Though the king as per terms made Dhana-vathi the slave of Gunavathi when everything was made known to him, the latter was too kind-hearted to take advantage of it. She restored her to original status and lived in friendly relationship with her.

Having disclosed his identity to all and taken leave of them, Vikrama with others returned to Ujjain to complete the six months' city life there.

We need not tell our readers that he was welcomed with intense joy by one and all of his subjects.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### OUTWITTING A RIVAL IN LOVE.

The next adventure in which King Vikrama was engaged in the following six months' life away from his city was in a city named Kalingapura. Arriving at a tank in company with Batti and the Vampire, he noticed a lovely maiden bathing in it with some of her friends. She too lifting up her head saw Vikrama and was smitten with his beauty and graceful form and bearing.

With a view to make him go to her city, she desired to convey by means of signs what she would feign have spoken if she were able to do so without attracting the attention of any.

She placed a tile over a heap of sand after placing a flower on her foot, before her departure from the place. Batti interpreted it to mean that she desired them to go over to her house which was in Kalingapura opposite to a mud wall roofed over with tiles.

Vikrama and Batti thereupon resolved to

proceed thither and enjoy this adventure. Arriving at the city of Kalingapura, they made enquiries and soon ascertained everything about the woman they came in search of.

She was given in marriage even when she was very young and her husband who had gone on a voyage shortly after, was not heard of since. All were of opinion that he might have perished somewhere, else he would never have remained silent separated from his wife and relations for such a long time.

This information made Vikrama hit upon a plan at once easy and successful to gain access to the woman in question.

He forthwith assumed the guise of a young woman using the extraordinary power he possessed and Batti became her father for the ~~nonce~~ <sup>for the</sup>!! The two then approached the woman's father, a rich merchant belonging to the Chetti community of that place. They were received kindly by the merchant to whom Batti said that the woman by his side was his daughter anxious to find out her husband who had gone on a long voyage but was not heard of since. He would like

to leave her in some place where she might be safe while he himself went in search of his son-in-law.

The merchant was delighted. He loved his daughter very much and her long separation from her husband afflicted him sorely. Here there was a woman placed exactly in the position in which she herself was placed. The two would make admirable companions capable of showing mutual sympathy resulting in benefit to both.

He told Batti about the situation of his daughter, and his willingness to oblige him, by taking care of his daughter during his absence.

He would make her the companion of his daughter placed in exactly the same position like herself.

Nothing would suit Batti better. He thanked the merchant for the offer which he gratefully accepted and hoped to return very soon with his son-in-law.

After the departure of Batti from his presence the merchant sent for his daughter to whose care and special attention he consigned the woman entrusted to his charge.

*handed over  
Bhagawan*



Vikrama goes a hunting in the forests.

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Dhana-Amaravathi, the merchant's daughter, embraced her new companion most affectionately and took her to her mansion.

Once there, King Vikrama threw off his disguise and disclosed himself to her, whose delight at his successful stratagem knew no bounds. The two were living very happily. Vikrama remaining disguised as a woman during day-time and assuming his real form during night when there would be no fear of prying eyes.

Days passed on and one day the Ruler of the city was passing by the mansion. He noticed the two young women chatting merrily on the terrace, not even deigning to cast a look at him, who was passing by in all his pomp and splendour.

This indifference on their part piqued his curiosity and he desired to know particulars about them. So he summoned one of his spies of whom he had many and asked him who they were.

Being told of their history and of how they were living separated from their husbands for a long time, the king opened his eyes wide with astonishment. "*Women separated from their husbands do not, if they are good women, desire*



*to show their persons to advantage with decorations, nor do they appear joyous and gay. The behaviour of these women supposed to feel the separation from their husbands very much was rather out of the common, and hence admitted strict scrutiny and looking into."*

Thus mused the Ruler of Kalingapura and desired to punish these women for their indifference towards him, their king, while he was passing by their mansion. Secret lovers they had, he felt almost certain. To ascertain who they were was his first move in the game of taking revenge on them for their indifference towards him. For this purpose he chose a few of his trusted spies to discover the lover and bring to him if possible both him and the woman he may be found to be in company with.

The prospects of a good reward and the king's favour <sup>persuaded</sup> prompted the spies to be very vigilant and active and many days' strenuous effort in their part would surely have resulted in the capture of the culprit if he happened to be one from outside the mansion. But the man they wanted was inside the house, a woman by day, and a man by night which hampered all their attempts and set them a-thinking!! The king

*ghastly  
intention*

was sure of his <sup>surmise</sup> ~~surmise~~ that there was a secret lover in the case and if he did not come from outside, he must be one found inside the house itself.

They must therefore divert their attention to the mansion and its immediate vicinity.

Thinking thus, the spies laid their plans accordingly, and kept a strict watch over the house and its garden both day and night. Many days elapsed and nothing positive of the guilt of the women was discovered. Yet the king insisted that the women had lovers and that the spies were lacking in skill to discover them. He even went to the extent of saying to the merchant that his daughter's conduct looked highly suspicious, which put him out of tune. He bemoaned the loss as he thought of his son-in-law and mused upon the saying *Virtue escapes not calumnious strokes*. Finally he decided upon taking his daughter by surprise one night and find out whether there was any foundation for the slander and suspicions she was the victim to.

To put his decision into practice, he without any notice entered the residence of his daughter on a particular night. There on seeing his be-

loved daughter and the new companion of hers sleeping soundly on different couches, he heaved a sigh of relief and returned to his mansion with a load off his mind.

Treating the king's suspicions with contempt he was as happy as he was before, fully convinced of his daughter's purity of life, thanks to God that on the particular night, his daughter was really like an innocent woman, by the merest chance !

A few days after, the merchant was agreeably surprised by the arrival of his long lost son-in-law whom he heartily welcomed.

Dhana-Amaravathi, though she pretended to be filled with joy at her husband's return, did not at all feel happy. She consulted with Vikrama as to the best mode of action at this juncture. Questioned by her husband as to who her companion was, she had told him not to be inquisitive. Finding that he was smitten by her beauty, she had warned him that he would come to grief if he but made any love to her. Both Vikrama and Dhana-Amaravathi knew that the love kindled in his breast was still burning and so they desired to take advantage of it to gain their own ends.

The poor son-in-law was skillfully enticed into the room of Vikrama and there his nose was chopped off with the aid of the Vampire.

Filled with shame and grief and anxious to avoid publicity, he quietly left his father-in-law's mansion, and reached a tank infested with crocodiles. Plunging into its waters to put an end to his existence, he was devoured by those monsters and thus no trace of him was left.

Meanwhile King Vikrama also disappeared from the house of Dhana-Amaravathi who raised a hue and cry that her husband had eloped with her companion with whom he had fallen desperately in love.

When the merchant heard of this news he did not know what to do ! He was sorely troubled by the fear that the father of the woman entrusted to him might return on any day accompanied perhaps by his son-in-law and ask for her ! What *reply* would he give him ? The King was not well disposed towards him and if a complaint were lodged against him, he was surely lost.

He spent a sleepless night and consoled himself with the reflection that the man might not return after all ! The day dawned and he was in his usual seat. He saw two persons



approaching him and was filled with apprehension. His worst fears were confirmed. They were none else but Batti and Vikrama as his recovered son-in-law. His heart sank within him when Batti after mutual greetings announced that he had found his long lost son-in-law who was really anxious to meet his wife !

Trembling with fear and in a hesitating manner he informed Batti about his son-in-law's return and his subsequent elopement. *running away*

In hearing this Batti's rage knew no bounds. What a cock and bull story the merchant was telling him ! Would he produce his daughter or be prepared to be dragged before the king to receive condign punishment. *well-deserved punishment*

The poor merchant fell at his feet and begged and prayed to be mercifully dealt with. The king had already a grudge against him and *make* so it would go hard with him if he were dragged before him.

Batti's whipped up anger cooled down and he said that there was no use of crying over spilt milk. For his part, he would put up with the loss of his daughter, but his son-in-law would not be so easily pacified and it behoved him to satisfy him.

The merchant's kinsmen suggested that his daughter Dhana-Amaravathi, since her husband had deserted her, might as well be given to Vikrama in marriage to take the place of the wife he had lost. This suggestion appealed to all and so was given effect to amidst great rejoicings.

By this time the 6 months' period of adventure was over and Vikrama with his newly married wife, Batti and the Vampire took affectionate farewell from all and returned to Ujjain where he offered worship to his deity—the Goddess Durga—prior to taking charge of the administration of his country. *before*

We will take leave of him in his capital city and meet him again when he begins his next tour of adventure recorded in the ensuing chapter.

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## CHAPTER VII

### UNDER THE SWAY OF *SANI* (SATURN)

There lived in Indra's court two maids of surpassing beauty. One was called 'Diamond' and the other 'Pearl'. On one occasion when business took Vikrama to Indra's court, he was noticed by the former. Struck with his extraordinary beauty, she immediately fell in love with him. After the departure of Vikrama to his capital city she approached Indra and told him of this love of hers towards a king of the mortals. Indra touched by her suffering ordained that she might meet him during one of his tours of adventure ; since in his capital city there were many ladies of more surpassing beauty than hers consequently there was every chance of her love being rejected. She was waiting for a suitable opportunity to gain her end and one presented itself soon.

Every mortal was bound to come under the sway of *Sani* at least for a period of seven years and a half. Then he will pass through a period of great trial and hardship.

King Vikrama too had to pass through this stage in his life and Indra, knowing this, advised 'Diamond' to meet him during this tour of adventure of his.

As Vikrama was a great favourite of Durga, she told him before his departure from his city to propitiate *Sani* and earn his blessings and good will.

As usual *Sani* came to Vikrama expecting resistance to the exercise of his sway over him. He was surprised to see him humble and at the same time dignified. When he gladly and willingly surrendered and entrusted his kingdom to him begging him to rule it for the period of seven years and a half, he was moved with pity and admiration. "A RULE IS A RULE" and he dared not break it even to oblige a devotee so staunch as Vikrama. So Vikrama had to go into exile for seven and a half years with the blessings of course of Durga and *Sani*.

Taking only his Vampire with him this time, Vikrama left his capital one night having left necessary instructions with his minister Batti for everything. Leaving inhabited localities far behind them, they reached a dense forest full of wild beasts and blood-thirsty demons. Enter-

ing it, Vikrama sat under a spreading banyan tree on a bed of soft moss, to take rest.

The Vampire had brought with him the necessary food which was served him there. Having partaken of it, he was leaning on the trunk enjoying the cool and refreshing breeze when, to his surprise, he saw an ugly woman coming towards him. He asked his Vampire as to who she was and what she was doing in that wild forest.

The Vampire of course knew that the ugly woman was none but the celestial maid 'Diamond' in disguise coming to win his master's love and consequently enlightened Vikrama on the point. When she approached him, he received her kindly and bade her be seated. Hearing from her own lips what the Vampire had told him, he desired to show him her true form which she did accordingly. Thereupon Vikrama resolved to make her his companion during the period of his exile and she gladly gave her consent for the same.

Remaining in her guise during day and resuming her lovely form at night, 'Diamond' was having a pleasant life in the company of her lover Vikrama. Days passed on, and one day

Vikrama was washing his hands in a tank wherein lived a snake by name Ananda and frog by name Jalandara. These two creatures were rulers like Vikrama once, but they were cursed by the sage Narada to remain in their present forms till released by Vikrama. As the period of the curse was over and the time for their liberation had come, it chanced that the snake wanted to gobble up Jalandara in his extreme hunger forgetting the fact that he was like himself an unfortunate king in that form.

Jalandara protested and reminded him of Narada's curse. He warned him that if he injured him King Vikrama was sure to punish him for it.

King Vikrama who knew the language of all creatures at once cut off from his body a big slice of flesh and threw it to the snake to enable him to satisfy his hunger without the necessity to kill Jalandara. At this both Ananda and Jalandara felt convinced that he was King Vikrama himself come to release them from their curse and suffering.

Emerging out of the tank they fell at his feet and narrated to him their history. Released from their curse by this act and regaining their

original human form, they expressed to Vikrama their desire to serve him during the period of his exile.

Vikrama consenting, they all proceeded forward and reached a rest-house at the outskirts of a fine city called Mathura. Leaving his companions there, Vikrama in the guise of a warrior entered the city and sought service under the king to submit to *Sani's* decree.

The Ruler of Mathura struck by the dignified courage and noble bearing of the applicant, forthwith appointed him as one of his body-guards on a liberal salary.

Passing by the name of Aditya, Vikrama was serving the king of Mathura during the day time and was passing nights in the company of "Diamond" carefully guarded by the faithful servants Ananda and Jalandara in the guise of a huge snake and a huge frog respectively.

Time passed on. There lived in the king's court two guards like Vikrama named Karkotaka and Kotika. These in course of time became close friends with Vikrama and used to follow him to his mansion after the day's duty in the palace was over.

As "Diamond" was an ugly maid servant



of Vikrama during the day time nobody took any notice of her. As she was a woman of surpassing beauty after sunset, she could not escape the notice of Karkotaka and Kotika when they paid their daily visit to their friend's house after the day's work was over. Filled with wonder and admiration at the sight of such a beauty in Vikrama's house these two in a private conversation with the Ruler of Mathura told him about her.

Piqued by curiosity, the king managed to gain access to Vikrama's abode unobserved by Ananda and Jalandara and see "Diamond" while she was asleep. Her beauty had inflamed his passion and he would have acted most foolishly and lost his life but for the timely interference of Kotika and Karkotaka who had accompanied him. They lifted him bodily and brought him to the palace without anyone knowing of his visit to Vikrama's mansion. There tormented by passion, he sent for his minister, a very wise man, and confided to him his love for the maid under the protection of Vikrama. The Minister advised him to stifle this unholy passion telling him that it would surely bring him into trouble if he did not crush it with a strong will.

Though the king felt the wisdom of following the advice of his wise minister, yet he had not sufficient strength of will to resist the force of the passion stirred up in him by the sublime beauty of "Diamond". So he beseeched his minister to find out some way to get the maid for him saying that he could not pluck this newly awakened love out of his heart and fling it aside.

The minister thereupon suggested to the king the advisability of putting Vikrama out of the way first, and then attempting to win the maid's love. A dangerous task which as a paid servant of his, he could not refuse to fulfil might remove him from his path and thus smooth the way to gain the lady of his love. The minister knew of such a task and gave particulars of it to the king to enable him to put his servant to it. He told him that there was a city named Valavandan at a great distance from their city. Its ruler had a daughter named 'Muthunahai'. Whenever she laughed, there used to fall from her mouth a shower of pearls of rare merit and lustre ! The king used to sell them to a merchant who in turn used to sell them to different kings and



A jeweller sitting on a blanket and dealing into precious stones.

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told in reply the history of Muthunahai and her captivity resulting in the non-production of pearls.

The only course left open for Vikrama was to get the pearls direct from the princess herself by making her laugh.

Gleaning all available information about the city Valavandan, Vikrama set out for it on the back of his Vampire. Arriving there he found the city a dead city indeed. There was not even a single living creature in the whole city. Filled with surprise he asked his Vampire for particulars. He said that the city was in that condition by the actions of the *Muni* who was performing a sacrifice which is nearing completion. Every morning, he severed the head of the princess from the trunk and restored her to life only during nights !!

Vikrama desired to be transported to the place where the body of the princess lay and his Vampire carried him thither forthwith. The next business was to restore the princess to life.

The Vampire showed Vikrama a cane kept there. At one end of it there was a joint. Pressing a button there, a kind of oil oozed out



at the end of it. Putting the head over the trunk and rubbing this oil at the joint, the princess was restored to life !! Seeing a stranger in place of the *Muni* she asked him who he was and what had brought him there. When he told her that he was Vikrama, the King of Ujjain, it made her laugh because, the *Muni* cut off her head every morning fearing this very Vikrama. Then a shower of pearls fell from her mouth which was secured by our hero forthwith.

He then had a long conversation with the princess and instructed her to be in a cheerful mood to throw the *Muni* off his guard and learn from him by skilful management particulars about him, his sacrifice and his ulterior objects. He then severed her head from the trunk once more and having placed everything as they were before, retired from there.

The *Muni* returned as usual after sunset and restored Muthunahai to life. This night she was not the Muthunahai of the previous days. She was gay and cheerful which surprised the *Muni* very much. He believed her words when she said that she was reconciled to her

lot, and would gladly become his wife, whenever he chose.

These words of Muthunahai had the desired effect on the *Muni*. He was intoxicated with delight and was ready to do whatever he was asked to do to test his love for her.

Muthunahai took him at his word and put him several questions to bring out his secrets.

She first asked him what the sacrifice which he was performing was for and was told in reply that the completion of it would make him the Ruler of the fourteen worlds.

She then asked him as to how he was going to restore her father and his subjects to life again after they were married. Carried away by his enthusiasm he described to her that there was a pot buried at a certain place, containing the lives of her father and his subjects. If the pot be broken, her father's kingdom would regain its original state.

The next important secret to be got out of him was how to destroy him. A direct question might arouse his suspicion. So with much cunning and coaxing, he was made to reveal that, to destroy him, one must sever his head from the trunk at one stroke, drink the blood

without letting even a drop of it on the ground, and also see at the same time that the trunk is kept suspended in space for an hour away from the ground. Failure to achieve any one of these would bring out many beings like himself who would surely destroy the man who attempted killing him.

Batti who was in the form of a lizard there listening to the conversation carried every bit of it to Vikrama the next moment. Day dawning the *Muni* went to perform the sacrifice and Vikrama and Batti restored Muthunahai to life and bade her have no fear telling her that they would restore her to her father ere long having destroyed the *Muni* and breaking the spell cast by him on her father, mother and others.

It was decided that Vikrama should sever the head of the *Muni* from the trunk and see that the trunk is kept from the surface of the earth while the Vampire managed to drink the blood without letting even a drop fall on the ground and throw the head into the sacrificial fire.

After the destruction of the *Muni* the pot containing the lives of the King of Valavandan and his subjects was taken out and broken. The

spell was consequently broken and the city of Valavandan was once again full of people in great bustle and activity.

The King Varana-kesari of Valavandan, having heard from his daughter the exploits of Vikrama and the manner in which he broke the spell and destroyed the *Muni*, was filled with gratitude and delight. On an auspicious hour he brought about the marriage of his daughter with him and sent them to the city of Mathura loaded with costly gifts of various kinds.

Meanwhile the Ruler of Mathura was being held in check by his wise minister, otherwise he would have committed indiscretion in his blind passion for 'Diamond' resulting in his death from the wrath of Vikrama.

The pearls gathered by Vikrama as they fell from the mouth of Muthunahai on various occasions exciting her laughter were separately kept and were brought to the king immediately after Vikrama's arrival in the city.

The king though he was not over-pleased at the return of his bodyguard thwarting his designs on the beautiful 'Diamond' yet had the good sense to keep to himself his feeling and receive him with all smiles and greetings.

His wise minister examining the pearls said that there were four kinds of them, namely fully developed, half developed, quarter developed, and one-eighth according to the laughter of the princess. A whole-hearted laugh brought out fully developed pearls while the other kinds of laugh procured the other varieties.

The wise manner in which the minister estimated the quality of pearls made Vikrama think that he was as wise as his Batti though not destined to such a long life of two thousand years.

The pearls were sent to the treasure house and Vikrama was dismissed from the presence of the king duly rewarded for the services rendered.

Days passed on and Kotika and Karkotaka, the two bodyguards of the king with Vikrama, had not given up their customary visits to the mansion of their friend. One night they caught a glimpse of both 'Diamond' and 'Muthunahai' and asked Vikrama who the new woman was. Hearing from him that she was the famous Muthunahai they were filled with astonishment!

On returning to the palace they repaired to the king's presence and gave him a glowing



description of the beauty of the new maid Muthunahai which roused his passion to the point of frenzy. Summoning his minister, he told him of this person and begged him to help him to win the woman living with his bodyguard Vikrama.

Finding that advice to the king to kill out the passion would be of no use, he held out to him a way to rid his rival from his path.

Beyond the seven oceans there was the Kingdom of the Lord of Serpents. He had a daughter who brought out a shower of priceless gems whenever she laughed. The bodyguard Vikrama may be deputed to bring a few of the gems. In attempting to get them he was sure to meet with destruction. The king might then lay siege to the heart of the woman he wanted to win.

The king considered the suggestion excellent and issued the necessary orders to Vikrama the next day. As a paid servant of the king Vikrama could not shirk the work assigned though he suspected the motive which prompted the king to send him on such a dangerous undertaking.

Returning home, he told his wives and

friends about the new business entrusted to him by the king. He knew that 'Diamond' was fully capable of taking care of herself in his absence but Muthunahai was not made of such stuff and hence caused him some anxiety.

When 'Diamond' heard this she took a small quantity of water in her hand, sprinkled it on Muthunahai who immediately became a beautiful doll which was put in a corner of the house to remain there till the return of Vikrama when it was to be changed into human form once again !!

Vikrama was delighted. His anxiety regarding Muthunahai being removed he consulted his friends Ananda and Jalandhara as to what should he done to procure the gems, desired by the King.

It was decided that Jalandhara should carry Vikrama to the Island and Ananda should clear the pathway to the palace of the Serpent-king of all venom, make it safe for him to pass and bring about the friendship of the Serpent-king with his master.

Carried on the back of Jalandhara, Vikrama (after some days' journey) reached a city near the outskirts of the Island belonging to the

Serpent-king and in which his capital city stood.

Passing along a street there, he noticed a woman weeping and beating her breast in one of the houses. When questioned as to the cause of her grief, she gave out as follows :—

The king of that city had a daughter of surpassing beauty. Every day she was given in marriage to some youth who used to die the very night of his marriage with the princess !! Her son had been selected as the bridegroom for that day and so she was filled with grief.

Vikrama consented to take the place of her son and after a little persuasion, she fell in with the scheme proposed by him.

Dressed in magnificent bridal robes and ornaments, Vikrama went to the palace where marriage with the princess was duly celebrated. While he was talking with his wife over a game at chess on the bridal night she exhibited symptoms of weariness and was about to swoon.

Vikrama turning aside to his Vampire, asked him what it was due to. Making use of his superhuman vision, he was able to tell Vikrama the cause of the weakness.

The brother of the serpent princess whom

Vikrama was going to see to get the gems, was desparately in love with this princess. He had a subterranean passage leading from his chamber in the palace of his father to the room in which they were just then. He used to come to the princess every night through this passage, when she would fall into a swoon. He would sting her husband to death, stay with her for the night and escape through the passage at sunrise having closed the mouth of it carefully.

He was now in the passage and hence the princess grew weak and was about to fall into a swoon.

Vikrama then asked his Vampire what should be done. He told him in reply that he would change places with him since poison could not affect him, while Vikrama should be ready with the sword to cut off the tail of the serpent-prince which act would make him beat a hasty retreat. He would not advice killing him for the reason that he was the brother of the woman whose favour his master was going to win.

The suggestion of the Vampire met with the approval of Vikrama and when the serpent-prince came into the room, he put it into prac-

tice and in a trice cut off a portion of his tail. Finding that this secret passage was discovered and it was a secret no longer, the serpent-prince flew down the passage with a broken tail and reached his room. Once there, he thanked his stars that he escaped with his life.

With the departure of the serpent-prince, the weakness of the princess vanished and Vikrama passed a pleasant night in her company.

Day dawned and a number of people were outside the princess's bed chamber ready with the coffin and other paraphernalia of death to convey and consign the corpse of the bridegroom to the King's family vault. Their astonishment knew no bounds when they saw the bridegroom alive and in full vigour and strength. They hastened to the king with the news which brought him immediately to his daughter and his joy knew no bounds when he came to know that her husband was none else but the renowned Vikramaditya, King of Ujjain.

After a few day's sojourn in his father-in-law's palace Vikrama thought of Ananda who immediately hastened to serve him.

Having cleared a path in the field of poison



surrounding the city of the king of the serpents, Ananda apprised him of the arrival of Vikrama his master.

The king of the serpents advanced to meet him and bring him to the palace. There he married his daughter to him with due pomp and splendour. Having stayed with this father-in-law for sometime Vikrama and his wife the serpent-princess departed for the city of the princess who was rescued from her brother and subsequently given in marriage to him by her father. From there, all proceeded to Mathura carried on the back of Jalandhara.

Leaving the two princesses with his other wives in his mansion Vikrama went to the king's court with a sufficient supply of the gems he desired to possess.

The king had to swallow the bitterness of his feeling and welcome Vikrama. The gems were sent to the treasure-house and Vikrama was duly rewarded and sent to his mansion.

Time passed on and the king heard that there were in Vikrama's mansion four women of surpassing beauty each of them worthy of his utmost exertion to win.

He begged his minister for the third time

to help him to win them. Finding that good advice would avail him nothing, he suggested this time not the sending of Vikrama in any dangerous enterprise, but attempting to make him perish in a well full of quicksilver. With this object in view, they suggested a visit to the well in question on the ensuing day. Vikrama suspecting the king's motive asked his Vampire about it. He told him in reply about the king's love for his wives which prompted him to send him on dangerous undertakings twice. This third attempt was to drown him in the well of mercury. The king proposed to drop as if by accident his ring into the well, and having requested Vikrama his paid-servant to recover it for him, to ride away from the spot quickly.

As any attempt at its recovery was sure to drown the man attempting it, he was confident that his rival would be got rid of to enable him to gain the love of the women he coveted.

When Vikrama heard of this plot, he laid his counter plot accordingly.

Summoning Jalandhara before him, he told him of the treacherous intentions of the king. He desired him to be inside the well when

the ring was dropped into it, seize it while falling and hand it over to him immediately. Having made the necessary arrangements to checkmate the plot laid against him Vikrama was ready to follow his master to the well of quicksilver.

After an early breakfast the king with numerous attendants proceeded to the place where the well was situated. Vikrama as the most favoured of the king's attendants was always very near the royal person. While they were looking into the well the ring which the king wore on one of his fingers slipped and fell into it. As Vikrama happened to be near the king, he was desired to recover the ring as it was one highly valued by him.

Having given the order to his bodyguard Vikrama, the king was riding off: but Vikrama did not stop behind and was riding along with him. The king was surprised at this but did not say anything then.

After they had all journeyed some distance the king halted at a wayside resthouse and there asked Vikrama for the ring lost in the well. He took it out of his purse in the coolest manner possible and handed it to him.

This made the king stare at Vikrama in astonishment since he had not left his side from the moment he dropped his ring into the well as if by accident !

Jalandhara's action in handing the ring to Vikrama was so quick that it had escaped the king's notice !

As the period of seven and a half year's sway of *Sani* over Vikrama was over, that *deva* in the guise of a Brahmin came to him, presented him with a lime fruit and begged him to forgive him.

The identity of Vikrama and the fact that he had to serve who was served by the action of *Sani* were duly disclosed.

The King begged Vikrama's pardon for the wrongs done to him. Vikrama not only forgave him, but also requested *Sani* who was about to seize him and trouble him not to do so.

Returning to his capital city Ujjain with wives and friends he was welcomed by Batti and others. From there, he dismissed his friends Ananda and Jalandhara after having duly thanked them for the services rendered.

They returned to their respective kingdoms,

and were welcomed by their subjects. Their friendship with Vikrama was so strong that they often paid him visits and were highly respected in return.

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The Brahmin boy restored to his father.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TEST OF A TRUE WOMAN'S LOVE.

Asked by his master whether their six months' city life was completed, Batti replied it would be by the dawn of the next day. So Vikrama got ready for the next adventurous tour of six months and started from his capital city having made the usual arrangements for the proper government of his kingdom.

He took Batti with him this time and they both arrived at a city called Rajapuri on the banks of a beautiful river flowing from the slopes of the Vindhya mountains. Its Ruler named Rajsingh was an ideal king beloved of his subjects. There lived in that city a woman name Aparanji whose lover was a Brahmin. Companions from childhood, their love towards each other was permanent. They would not be separated from each other and it appeared that each lived solely for the other.

Their life was one of unalloyed happiness for a long time, but as fate would have it, the Brahmin sickened and died leaving Aparanji plunged in deep grief.

While she was lamenting and bemoaning the irreparable loss she invoked the presence of the Goddess Durga and propitiated her. Pleased with her devotion to her and her unchanging love for her deceased lover, she conferred on her the boon that king Vikrama and Batti would be instrumental in bringing her lover back to life. They would desire her to enter into fire which she should unhesitatingly do. To restore her to life they would procure some holy water and a magic wand both of which she should possess herself of as soon as she was restored to life. With those she would be able to bring her lover back to life.

Having said these words the Goddess Durga disappeared and Aparanji having made proper arrangements to preserve the corpse of her lover from putrefication was patiently waiting for the arrival of Vikrama and his minister at the city.

Meanwhile, Vikrama and Batti in the guise of diamond merchants were plying their trade in the several parts of the city by day, taking their night's rest in a public rest-house.

One night while Vikrama was passing along a street he came to the house of Aparanji. Destiny took him inside the house where Aparanji

was patiently expecting some such happening as hinted by Durga. A glance at the new-comer convinced her that he was king Vikrama and none else. Her love for the Brahmin was so strong that she was prepared to do anything to restore him to life. So she welcomed Vikrama and pleased him by her assiduous attention to his comforts.

Though a very shrewd king, Vikrama was not able to see through the motive of Aparanji in showing him, an utter stranger, so much love and attention. He took her attentions for the manifestations of unselfish effusion of love for himself.

Next morning he returned to Batti rather late which made the latter put rather pointed questions to the former eliciting particulars about Aparanji and her unselfish love at first sight for Vikrama.

As Batti had beforehand received information from the goddess Durga about Aparanji and her lover, he knew that the favours she showed his master were intended only to restore her lover to life through his instrumentality. As he was desired by the *Devi* to further the plan of Aparanji and bring about the result



desired by her agreeably to the boon conferred by herself, he had his plan already cut and dry. With a view to bring about the destruction of Aparanji in fire, he told Vikrama that her love towards him was not sincere and challenged him to prove it otherwise.

Vikrama was cocksure about the love of Aparanji towards himself and so was ready to put her fidelity to test.

But he told his master to request of Aparanji her beautiful hair which was the main if not the sole cause of her beauty. When Vikrama with great reluctance solicited this sacrifice to prove her love for him, Aparanji without hesitation clipped her long wavy silken tresses and handed them over to him.

Presenting them to Batti Vikrama now asked him whether he was satisfied as to the sincerity of her love. He again maintained that his original opinion was correct and that the love of Aparanji was not unselfish.

Vikrama was very angry at his minister's obstinacy in clinging to his baseless opinion even after such a test. Yet, accustomed as he was to yield to his minister's sage and wise counsels, he was ready to submit his Aparanji to

another test. Batti took Vikrama at his word when he said that she would go through fire for him and desired him to put her to the same test.

Though Vikrama was astonished at this strange behaviour of Batti yet he told Aparanji when he next met her, what was desired of her by his minister.

Without the least hesitation she followed him to the place where Batti was and told him to get the fire ready.

With the alacrity worthy of a better cause, he raised a blazing fire into which she without flinching in the least entered and was reduced to ashes ! !

Horror-struck at this, Vikrama choking with rage asked Batti whether he was not satisfied that she had by her death showed her strong love for him. Even now Batti said that his former opinion remained unchanged.

At this reply of his minister Vikrama could contain himself no longer. He challenged him to prove his statement and Batti was ready to do it. Together they invoked the presence of Durga who appeared before them and gave them some holy water and magical wand to bring Aparanji back to life at their request.

Sprinkling some water over the ashes and waving the wand over it, Aparanji stood before Vikrama and Batti as beautiful as ever.

Glancing round, she saw the holy water and the magic wand. With the permission of Vikrama and Batti, she possessed herself of both and hastened to her house to restore her lover to life.

Vikrama could not understand the meaning of all those. He desired enlightenment from Batti who before doing it desired him to go to Aparanji's house and test her love towards him for the last time.

Vikrama was but too glad to do it for he truly loved the woman and so desired to meet her as early as possible. He hastened to her house and gave the customary knock !

A voice from within asked him who he was. When he replied that he was the diamond merchant soliciting admission to her presence, a cold voice bade him be off and he recognised it as that of his faithful Aparanji.

Returning to Batti, he told him of the reception and asked for enlightenment. Batti told him that she stood all the test only for the sake of her Brahmin lover, whose life she beg

ged of *Devi* and got it through their instrumentality.

This adventure made Vikrama a sadder but a wiser king. He begged Batti to forgive him for the rash words spoken in anger and asked him as to the number of days still remaining to complete the six months' tour.

On Batti's replying that there were twenty-five days still remaining, he desired him to go back to his kingdom and remain in charge of it, while he completed the tour period of six months.

The return of the king was celebrated by the ladies with great delight and Batti handed over the charge of the kingdom to him to be held for the next six months prior to his next tour of adventure recorded in the ensuing chapter.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### AN ADEPT AT INTRIGUE.

Vikram's tour of adventure of this time brought him and his minister to a city outside of which there was a big tank of pure water covered over with various aquatic plants, lilies and lotus flowers.

There lived in that city a very bad woman whose morals had evoked very strong criticism from one and all. *produced*

Finding her incorrigible and fearing that the bad example set by her by her open shameless conduct might corrupt the good boys and girls of the city, the people one day beat her to death and laid her corpse near the tank to serve as a warning to others likely to follow in her footsteps.

While Vikrama and Batti were washing their hands and faces in the tank, they overheard the conversation carried on by the women of the city who had come there to bathe or carry water from the tank. Among them there were two sisters. One of them was a mere girl. The elder of these shed tears at the sight of the



corpse and the younger asked her as to why she was so moved. Hearing that her pity for the fate of the unfortunate woman drew tears out of her eyes, the younger remarked that she deserved no better fate having managed her intrigues so very clumsily, adding that she in her position would have managed it without even being caught.

Profoundly interested in the study of human beings Vikrama expressed his desire to his minister to see how this girl would carry on her intrigues as she boasted if she were closely watched and kept under rigid control, when she was sufficiently old.

Batti suggested the desirability of his marrying the girl and trying the experiment.

The idea tickled the king's fancy and he resolved to carry out the suggestions of his minister Batti.

Ascertaining by a passer-by who those were, he resolved upon a definite course of action. As he was given to understand that they were the daughters of a rich diamond merchant of that city, he and Batti became diamond merchants for the nonce. *for the time being*

Having procured some gems and diamonds

of rare merit through the instrumentality of the Vampire, they opened their shops directly in front of the merchant's shop. As they had calculated, the merchant came to inspect the gems. By tactful management, they won his good opinion which resulted in their becoming his guests.

While taking over their dinner, Batti innocently gave out that his friend was in search of a bride suitable for his rank and position as a very wealthy dealer in precious stones.

The merchant was caught in the bait thrown by Batti and said he had a daughter whom if he chose he might marry.

Batti said that nothing would suit his friend better, and accepted the offer. The necessary arrangements were made and ere long the girl they wanted to study was Vikrama's duly wedded wife.

After a few days' stay in his father-in-law's house Vikrama gave out to him that he has been absent from his home for a pretty long time and would like to return thither to look after his affairs personally.

Though the dealer was loathe to part from his daughter and son-in-law, yet he yielded to

the arguments of Batti dwelling upon the various imaginary concerns of his friend sure to go to rack and ruin unless personally attended to.

Leaving all the gems they had with the merchant and accompanied by his daughter, they both took affectionate farewell of all their new friends and relatives and departed from the city.

On the way, they came upon a splendid castle which was kept locked up. Hailing a passer-by they asked him who the owner of the castle was. He gave out in reply that the castle once belonged to a king named Kartika Varma. He was the Ruler of the adjoining city Kalakan-dapura. Though he was a wise and just ruler he was without any heir to succeed him to the throne. As he did not want his castle to be occupied by any worthless jack, he turned every one out of it shortly before his death, locked it, and having thrown the key away cursed that none but the ruler Vikrama should be able to open the lock and enter it.

Here was a splendid castle ready for the occupation of king Vikrama and his newly wedded wife, thanks to the kindness of the king Kartika Varma ! Pavalakodiyal, the jeweller's daughter married by Vikrama had grown into a

strong and robust woman now, and so this castle furnished a really splendid bulwark to checkmate her efforts at intrigue if she were to attempt at one at all !

Approaching the castle gate Vikrama touched the lock and lo, it flew open !! The trio then entered it and to their intense surprise found it to contain everything necessary to live there for many days.

Days passed on and Pavalakodiyal was closely watched by Vikrama and Batti. Nobody was allowed inside but an old washerwoman and she too while either Vikrama or Batti was inside the castle.

In fact she was never lost sight of, either Batti or Vikrama always keeping her company. During nights, she had to sleep having Batti on one side of the room and Vikrama on the other side and her virginity remained perfectly safeguarded for many days.

One day the old washerwoman entrusted the cloths she had brought from the castle to her son a strong and lovely youth. Among them there was the one worn by Pavalakodiyal diffusing fragrance all round and bewitching the senses. At an age easily susceptible to love, it

*charming*

is no wonder that the fellow immediately fell in love with the woman the owner of that splendid garment.

His one thought was about the woman who had worn that cloth. Brooding over her, he grew emaciated losing all appetite.

His mother noticing it pressed him to confide to her the source of his grief which was slowly driving him to his grave.

Having a deep sigh, he told her of his love for the unknown owner of the cloth, consuming him both day and night. Hearing this confession of her one and only son, she was plunged in deep grief. She knew that the woman belonged to two noblemen of dignified bearing and mien far beyond the reach of her son. So she desired him to crush this love of his promising to find out a suitable wife for him from among their own people. But the fellow would not be consoled and begged his mother hard to convey to the woman the fact of the deep love for her.

With great reluctance, the old woman consented to inform the woman in the castle about her son's deep love for her, at the earliest opportunity possible. The next morning when she was admitted inside the castle the desired



opportunity presentsd itself. She had a few minutes' conversation with Pavalakodiyal when she managed to convey to her in a low whisper her son's feelings towards her. She was told in reply, that *faint hearts never won fair ladies* in a low whisper and sent away.

There was hope kindled in the youth's breast when the reply message was conveyed to him by his mother. When night fell he went to reconnoitre the castle and its surroundings. To his intense joy, he found a big tree grown there, climbing which he could reach the end of a branch overhanging the castle wall and drop down inside the castle.

With the courage born of hope and love, he was inside the castle walls in a moment and began to think of his next course of action. As every thing was very quiet inside that castle he concluded that the inmates had gone to sleep. With cat-like stealthy steps he entered the room where the three were sleeping. Guided by the instinct of love, he gently pressed the feet of Pavalakodiyal which act awoke her from her sleep.

Seeing the stranger and guessing that he was the youth spoken of by the washer-woman, she

bade him come near which he did with great alacrity.

Dallying with him, she poked the king's ribs with her elbow as if by accident which made him open his eyes. Seeing his wife dallying with some one, he concluded that some one was Batti. Angry at his shame less behaviour and desiring to shut out the unpleasant sight, he turned on his side, faced the wall and went to sleep.

She now repeated her action directing it to Batti, who on opening his eyes concluded that his master had succumbed to the influence of love and so had given up his cherished project of human study, to wit the study of Pavalakodiyal the would-be adept at carrying on intrigue. Finding himself in a delicate position he too adopted the procedure followed by his master on the other side of the lovers in intrigue.

Before day-dawn, the youth was safely hidden in a corner of the castle by Pavalakodiyal, who was in all innocence attending her duties.

When Vikrama and Batti got up from their beds each was ashamed to look the other in the face. Turning his face away Vikrama murmured complaints against Batti's action during the night

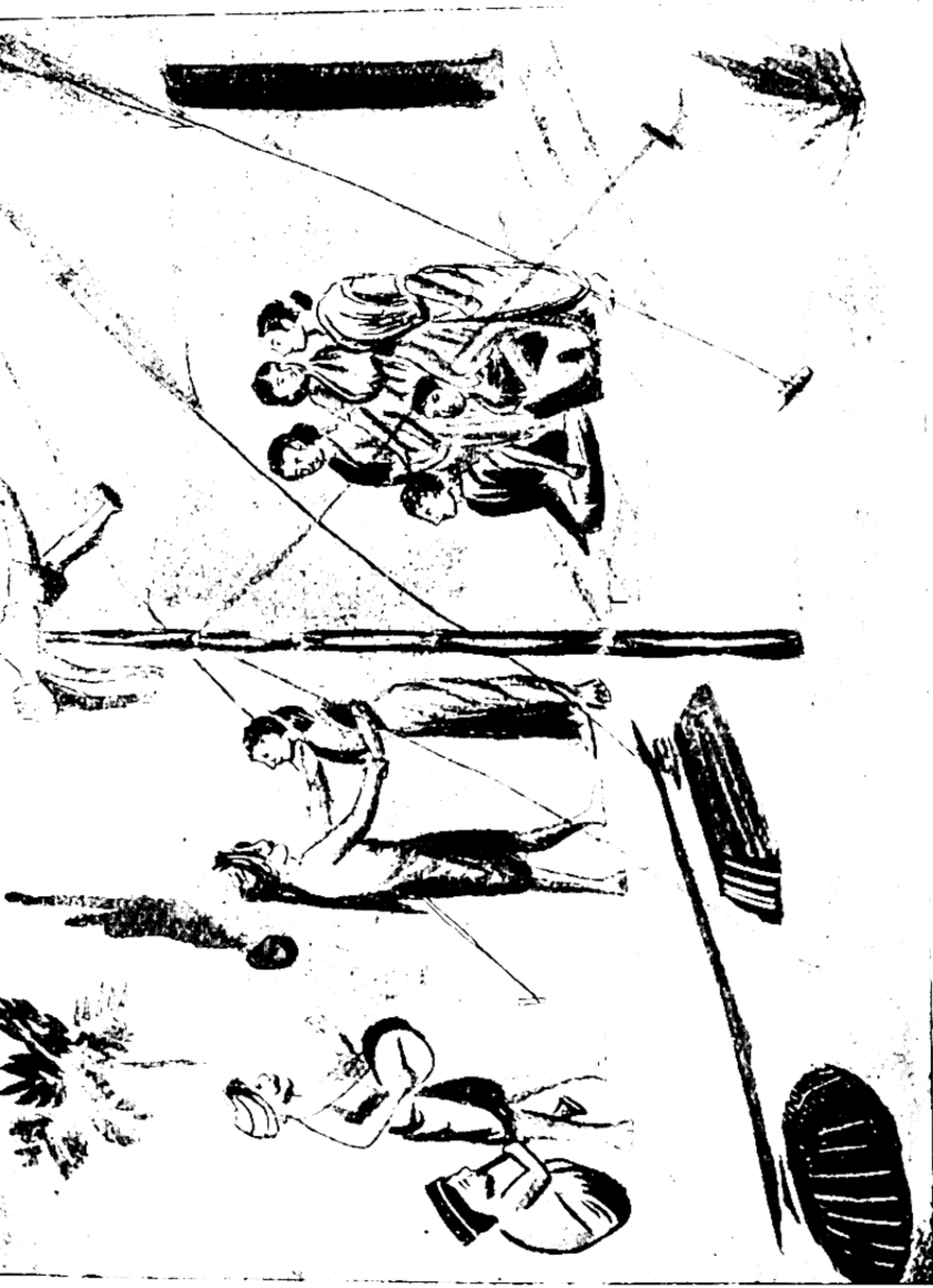
characterising it as the most shameless. This was enough to set Batti's vigorous brain at thinking.

While he was thinking hard walking on the terrace of the castle his attention was drawn towards two *Rishis* coming flying at a distance. Alighting on the ground, they each took a fair woman out of their matted hair and set them on the ground. They went behind a clump of trees to answer calls of nature. There they in their turn brought out each of them her lover kept concealed in her robes for a similar purpose.

Seeing this, Batti mused as follows :—

“These flying *Rishis* influenced by jealousy and mistrusting their wives were carrying them in their matted locks wherever they went. Yet those women outwitting their husbands managed to have lovers! So Vikrama's wife Pavalakodiyal also may have a lover concealed somewhere in this castle. It is almost certain that he was with her last night and I mistook him for my master. Using these *Rishis* I will force this Pavalakodiyal to bring out her lover.”

Thus making up his mind and arranging his plans, Batti approached the *Rishis* and begged them to go to the castle and partake of its



The man-hating Princess witnessing a play.

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hospitality. Nothing loath they consented and duly arrived at the castle where they were warmly received by Vikrama.

Batti desired Pavalakodiyal to prepare meals for ten persons and Vikrama was surprised to hear it. He could not understand why he wanted food for ten persons while there were only five. Yet he kept silent that his friend might have sufficient reasons and give them out by and by.

Batti, however, did not enlighten him on the point. As soon as the meals were ready, he with his own hand spread ten leaves and desired Pavalakodiyal to serve the preparations equally on all of them. When that was done he desired the *Rishis*, Vikrama and Pavalakodiyal to occupy one leaf each while he himself at the fifth. He then told the *Rishis* that it was not proper to satisfy their hunger keeping some hungry. The *Rishis* would not understand him at first, but when pointed at their matted locks in a significant manner, they took their wives out and made them sit at two of the remaining five leaves wondering how he might have known their secrets.

There were still three more leaves left

unoccupied and Vikrama wondered what was to happen next.

Addressing the wives of the *Rishis* Batti said, "Ladies ! while you eat and satisfy your hunger, it is not proper for you to permit those with you to remain hungry. Please bring them out to enable them to eat in our company." Though the ladies addressed were filled with terror at the disclosure of their secret amour yet they had no other alternative but to comply with Batti's request. Their lovers were brought out and duly installed in two seats out of the three remaining, to the dismay of the two flying *Rishis*.

Vikrama wondered what the tenth leaf was for and Batti came to his help.

Addressing Pavalakodiyal Batti said "Madam ! while all are ready to begin the dinner why should your man alone be left out in a corner ? It would be a great sin if we did so. So kindly usher him in and let him occupy the unoccupied leaf."

Finding that her intrigue was found out and that there was no use hiding it, Pavalakodiyal hastened out, brought her lover in to occupy the last leaf.

The dinner was over and Vikrama surprised beyond measure at the facts disclosed consulted Batti as to what was best to be done.

The *Rishis* wanted to discard their faithless wives. Vikrama had no particular attraction for Pavalakodiyal. So it was resolved that the washerwoman's son marries Pavalakodiyal and becomes the ruler of Kalakandapura, while the two lovers of the *Rishi's* wives become his ministers.

Having thus arranged this affair, Vikrama and Batti returned to Ujjain and assumed the reins of the government. We shall meet them again in their tour of adventure recorded in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE FATE OF THE GOLDEN CITY.

Near the banks of the river Sarayu flowing from the slopes of the mountain Mandara, there lived in his capital city a mighty ruler named Umapathi. One day out hunting in the forests with his 100 sons and a large retinue, they all felt very hungry and thirsty. Searching for water they came to the hermitage of the sage Vasishta, who by his miraculous powers, created a river there in which they satisfied their thirst. The hospitable host further desiring to satisfy their hunger also invoked the presence of Kamadhenu, the celestial cow of plenty. This cow had the power to feed sumptuously any number of guests without the least effort !

Understanding what was required of her, she at once created out of her body a splendid repast and the necessary servants to wait upon them.

Filled with wonder and envy the king desired to gain possession of the wonderful

cow. Mastered by the deep desire to covet the precious animal, he set his men to catch her.

Provoked to anger beyond measure at this unparalleled and unheard-of outrage on hospitality, the celestial creature sought for and obtained from Vasishta permission to punish the fellows.

Emitting from her body and her nostrils diverse weapons and fire she killed and consumed all the followers of the king ! He thereupon directed his sons and their followers to take Vasishta, the author, as he thought, of all the mischief, prisoner.

When they attempted to attack him with their weapons, he planted in front of him his leaning staff which scattered them in all directions. Surprised at this marvellous phenomena, the king despised his kingly power and turned an ascetic. Performing severe penance, he accumulated great merit and became a royal *Rishi* of extraordinary power.

On one occasion, he, arriving at the vicinity of a city named Thangamapuri or the golden city, sent a *Sanyasi* messenger to its ruler to inform him of his arrival there.



Bound to do homage to holy persons in general and to the *Raja Rishi* Viswamitra in particular, the king Thangeswara and his wife Swarnakandarupi were getting ready to depart for the rest house in which the sage was reported to have alighted. Meanwhile, the *Rishi* thought that the king was making unnecessary delay and so grew furious with anger at what he thought the king's insolence and want to proper regard for his person. Using the mighty power he had acquired by his long and severe penance, he cursed that the citizens of the golden city should die premature deaths and remain as corpses.

The queen Swarnakandarupi was a very wise woman. Seeing her subjects becoming corpses in an inexplicable manner and before similar fate overtaking her, she hastened to the sage Viswamitra. Falling at his feet she implored his mercy. Moved by her tears the sage said that she and her husband would die and be born again in the city called Pradhishtanapuri on the banks of the river Thamraparni flowing down the slopes on Mount Swethaparni. There they would be re-united in wedlock, free their city from the curse it was

laid under and become its rulers once again through the help of the renowned king Vikrama.

Swarnakandarupi again implored the sage to grant her another boon and he consented. She begged him to grant her the privilege of being united to her husband in her next birth at the age of sixteen in addition to the privilege of retaining the memory of the present birth and worshipping her tutelary deity in the city of Thangamapuri every night after she was born again. Granting her prayer and promising to place at her disposal a celestial horse when she came of age after rebirth at Pradishtanapuri as the daughter of its ruler, the sage took his departure from that city.

The king was accordingly born as the son of a brahmin in the city of Pradishtanapuri and was named Adhimulam.

The queen was born in the palace of the ruler of the same city as a princess and was named Sanjivini.

When the time had come for the city of Thangamapuri to regain its former status and prestige through the agency of king Vikrama, the brahmin child Adhimulam had grown and developed into a fine youth and the princess

Sanjivini had grown into a buxom lass of sixteen years.

The memory of her past life and the particulars of the boon conferred on her by the sage Viswamitra dawned to Sanjivini when she became sixteen years old. By the exercise of her will she summoned one night the celestial horse placed at her disposal by the sage as promised, and rode to the city of Thangamapuri, with the necessary articles, to worship her tutelary deity Sundarmurthi in the temple there. From that day forward she made it a practice to fly through space on her celestial horse to that city every night to worship the deity Sundarmurthi in the temple.

This was going on for some time when one day Sanjivini was called to the presence of her father who expressed to her his desire to see her married to a proper husband. She told him in reply that she would marry none but the one who brought her the news of the city of Thangamapuri and how it was at that particular period. At this, the king stared at her in astonishment. All had heard of the city she mentioned, but none knew where it was. It was considered more or less a fabulous city.

Recovering shortly from his surprise, the king asked his daughter as to whether she was jesting. When she replied that she was never more serious, the king who loved his daughter deeply consented to satisfy her even in this mad whim of hers as he thought.

With the hope that his daughter might give up this mad whim when once she came to realise the absolute impossibility of the task set to gain her hand, he issued proclamations throughout the length and breadth of the land that his daughter Sanjivini would wed any one who brought her particulars of the city of Thangamapuri as it was then.

Many brought imaginary particulars hoping to take the princess in, since she herself was not, as they thought, aware of it and so was likely to swallow any agreeable bit of news and give her consent for her marriage with the successful candidate.

She rejected them all with scorn and contempt, most often telling them that their imagination believed the actual state of things in existence at the city of Thangamapuri.

With the progress of time, candidates for her hand grew few and far between and the king,

her father, grew anxious on her account. But Sanjivini was sure that one would ere long bring her the news of this city and wed her!

Leaving the princess for the present we shall see what our Adhimulam, the brahmin youth was doing.

He and learning parted company long ago since neither of them would suit the other. He would not court learning and learning was too proud to make advances to him. As a result of this, our Adhimulam was a master of the dunces in his city. He used to take long rambles in the city without definite aim to while away the time and was considered by all to be, though not absolutely, mad, at least next door to it.

One day passing by the palace, he heard two men talking about Sanjivini and the royal proclamation. This was enough to give him the first impulse to draw near his destined bride. He boldly entered the palace and claimed the hand of the princess, who laughed at him and asked him in jest what he knew of Thangamapuri. The semi-witted fellow readily replied, that there were streets and bazars there. At this there was a chorus of laughter and the poor



Adhimulam was beaten soundly for his pains and driven out of the palace.

Inspite of such a treatment the mad fellow would not give up besieging her with his attentions. Day after day he repeated his visits to her to be thrust out by the servants.

One day, partly in jest and partly to get rid of his troubles at least for a time, one of the servants tired of beating him said that he would do well to go to king Vikrama of Ujjain and obtain his help to win the princess Sanjivini. Impelled by fate, the fellow took the suggestion seriously and started for the capital city of king Vikrama. Arriving at his court he told him the purpose of his visit to him and implored his help.

Moved with pity at his distress caused by disappointed love, Vikrama made up his mind to help him.

Learning from Batti that his 6 months' tour was to commence the very next day, he repaired to the temple of his tutelary deity Kalidevi to obtain her usual blessing.

Day dawning, he set out in company with the brahmin youth having entrusted the administration of his country to Batti. Carried

swiftly on the shoulders of the Vampire, they soon reached a city named Pradhishtanapuri. Having arranged for the food and lodging to the brahmin youth in a brahmin's house till his return, Vikrama with his Vampire set out from there in search of the city of Thangamapuri. Crossing the outskirts of the city, they soon came to a huge banian tree under whose spreading branches they halted to take rest for a while. In a conversation carried on between him and his Vampire, Vikrama asked the latter whether he knew anything of this city called 'Thangamapuri.'

It is true that the geographical knowledge of the Vampire was vast, but this city and its particulars were not within his knowledge at all. So Vikrama could get no help from his servant the Vampire this time and was thrown entirely on his own resources.

As they had taken rest for a sufficiently long time, they commenced their travel again and soon arrived at an uninhabited forest. Reconnoitering it, they came to an open glade with a beautiful tank covered over with lotuses and lilies, on one side. On the other side of it there was a cauldron of boiling ghee.

Questioned by his master, the Vampire using

his vision found that seven *Rishis* doing penance in the forest had set that cauldron over the fire. He further enlightened Vikrama saying that the *Rishis* used by turns to fall into the boiling ghee one each day to provide food for all. The remaining six approaching the cauldron would call the absent *Rishi* by name and he would forthwith appear to share the boiled meat with them !

This information filled Vikrama with delight. He made up his mind to use these *Rishis* to obtain information regarding the golden city. To achieve the end in view, he was waiting near the cauldron awaiting the arrival of the *Rishis*.

Shortly one of them was approaching the cauldron to fall into it when Vikrama pushed him aside and fell into the boiling ghee himself. While the *Rishi* was standing there filled with astonishment, the other *Rishis* turned up. Seeing their companion standing there without having disappeared into the cauldron, they grew angry and wanted to curse him. When explanation followed, they too were able to find out that the person who forestalled the intention of one of them and fell into the cauldron to provide a

dish of meat for them, was none else but the renowned Vikrama, the ruler of Ujjain.

Laying the table for eight, they called Vikrama by name who forthwith emerged out of the cauldron and saulted the *Rishis*! The meat was fished out of the cauldron and divided equally among them. After satisfying their hunger, the *Rishis* asked Vikrama what he required of them in return for the dinner provided for them by his daring act.

When he told them that he wanted particulars about Thangamapuri, they shook their heads and said that they had only heard of it but had not seen it. But they were able to guide him to another "*Rishi*" who in his turn directed him to a huge banian tree on which innumerable birds alighted after sunset to pass the night.

Listening to the conversation of two of those birds, Vikrama understood where the city, he was in quest of, was located, for they had said that they had just returned from that very city after having stayed there throughout the day searching for food. When they said that they were going there the next day also, Vikrama was filled with delight. Assuming the guise of

a tiny insect by depriving one of its life and transferring his soul into it, he remained attached to the wings of one of the birds and was carried to the golden city next morning when the birds went thither.

Meanwhile, his Vampire had transported the body left to its care untenanted. Entering it, Vikrama reconnoitred the city deprived of all signs of life and its activities. Admiring the beauties and grandeur of that splendid city and pitying its fate he spent the day in it. After nightfall, he was taking shelter in the city temple. While there, he noticed a maiden of extraordinary beauty alighting from the back of a celestial horse. She entered the temple having fastened the horse to the flag-staff carrying materials for the worship of the deity there. When her business was over, she came out, remounted her horse which swiftly carried her away from there.

Vikrama thought that he had gathered enough particulars about the golden city to be communicated to the princess Sanjivini through Adhimulam. So with the aid of his Vampire he reached Pradhishtanapura, and told the brahmin youth the particulars gathered by him



and sent him to the princess of his love with the necessary instructions.

Entering the palace of the princess Sanjivini, with the courage born of accurate knowledge of the golden city, he approached her who was seated on a divan, surrounded by her maids and servants.

Seeing him, Sanjivini said, "Oh, Brahmin ! have you brought news from the golden city this time at least ? I find that your face has lost its expression of stupidity and shows that you have some thing important to communicate to me."

With a slight inclination of the head, Adhimulam said, "Listen, Oh Princess, to the particulars I have brought from Thangamapuri. The city is unparalleled in its splendour and magnificence with gardens and pleasure houses, tanks and temples, splendid palaces and fine mansions. of the wealthy. Yet it is a city of the dead for every creature in it is lifeless, the plants inculded."

"Every night, a maiden of surpassing beauty rides over to that city on the back of a celestial horse and performs *poojah* to the image of Sundaramurthi in the temple there."

"These are, my princess, the particulars I

have gleaned of that city and I claim your hand in marriage in return for the trouble I have taken as proclaimed by your noble father."

The princess Sanjivini was filled with delight at the news. She thrilled with pleasure and said, "My lord ! You are my husband and I am your wife. We were the king and queen of that city once. Cursed by the sage Viswamitra it became a city of the dead. We were born here to remove the curse and restore it to its original state. Do thou, my dear husband, repair thither to meet me there. Together we shall see that the curse it lays under is removed and that we rule over it once more."

All were filled with astonishment when the past history of Thangamapuri was disclosed by its queen now born as the princess of Pradhish-tanapura. Adhimulam too recovered his memory as the ruler of the Golden City and he was no longer the semi-witted Brahmin youth. Going back to Vikrama he begged him to restore the golden city to its former state having removed the curse it lay under.

Vikrama thereupon found out through his Vampire the locality where the sage Viswamitra was doing penance. Arriving there, he was

received kindly by that sage. When he told him the purpose of his visit, the sage said that the curse would be removed the very moment Adhimulam and Sanjivini meet in their capital city Thangamapuri.

Returning to his place at Pradhishtanapura, Vikrama transported himself and Adhimulam to Thangamapuri through the agency of his Vampire. Sanjivini had already arrived there on her celestial horse. The very moment they met, the spell was broken and the city Thangamapuri was all bustle and activity as it was immediately before the curse fell on it.

Seeing the city restored to its king and queen in as prosperous a condition as it was before and having taken affectionate farewell of them, Vikrama returned to Ujjain having completed the six months' tour.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PRINCESS SATHGUNAVATHI RECOVERED FROM THE MUNI.

As it was usual with Vikrama, he one day desired his Vampire to go about and ascertain whether there was any adventure worthy of his undertaking, a few days before the commencement of his tour of adventure. The Vampire in obedience to his master's orders was flying over cities, mountains, hills, dales and valleys keeping a sharp look out. Arriving at a city called Varanapuri, he was surprised to find that there was no life in that city and that every creature in it was lying there lifeless. Happening to remain there even after sun-set, his surprise was turned into great astonishment when he found the city gradually reviving and becoming a city of living creatures once again !! Questioning one who was passing by, he was told that the city was laid under a curse from a *Rishi's* wife whose modesty was outraged by the shameful behaviour of its ruler. Further the princess his daughter was carried away by

a *Muni* and thus the misery of the king and his queen was complete.

As this news interested the Vampire very much, he hastened to his master with it. As it had chanced that the news reached Vikrama when he was about to start on his tour of adventure, he forthwith reached the dead city, carried on the shoulders of his Vampire.

Going round the city Vikrama's tender heart was moved with pity for the unfortunate citizens of that place. He forthwith took a vow that he would remove the curse from the city and prayed to his goddess Durga to help him.

Though the Devi was ready to help him to revive the city yet she told him as follows:—

‘Listen, oh Vikrama ! to the circumstances by which this city Varanapuri was placed under a curse and then decide your course of action.

King Kovil Swarupa, though ordinarily not a bad king, was on one occasion very rude to the wife of a sage. Smitten by her beauty, he attempted to outrage her modesty which roused her anger. She cursed that his city should be a dead city by day, a living one by night and her curse is having its effect as she is a very



virtuous woman. It is the duty of all good people to see that the words of virtuous men and women are respected.'

Hearing these words of the Devi, Vikrama understood that she wanted him to revive the city with the help of the lady who had cursed it. So he made up his mind to win her favour.

In the guise of a very old Brahmin, he came near the hermitage where she lived. There, with the help of his Vampire, he caused a fire into which he pretended that he was going to fall.

Attracted by his lamentations the *Rishi's* wife came out of her hermitage. Seeing the old Brahmin and guessing his intentions, she hastened towards him to stop him from falling into the fire.

'Prevent not, Good lady, this miserable wretch, from putting an end to his miserable existence. If you but know his afflictions and sorrows you would surely share his views and think that death would be preferable to a life such as his', added Vikrama in the saddest possible tone he could command.

'Poor man ! What has happened to make you so very miserable ? Why do you take such

a pessimistic view of things? Perhaps deep sorrow makes you view things in a worse light than they really are! Restrain your grief and tell me wherein lies your grief that I might either relieve you from it if I can, or offer consolation to soothe it.'

I sincerely thank you, kind lady, for your kind sympathy. I think that I would feel my grief less if I were to confide it to such a sympathetic and kind-hearted lady like yourself. Listen therefore, oh virtuous one, to my sad tale of woe.

Living childless for a number of years of wedded life, I in company with my dear wife visited various holy places in the land. Not a holy river but had been visited by us, and not a sacred shrine but had been visited by us. After many days of severe austerities, God took pity on us and blessed us with a son who was the delight of our heart. He grew into a fine youth and I had him married to a fine maiden in the city of the dead. One day his father-in-law Veda-Sastra-Batta took him to his house and he was living there for some time. One day I went there in company with my wife to see my son and daughter-in-law but to my

sorrow and grief I found every living creature there dead ! ! How long we remained senseless there I cannot tell. When we recovered our consciousness the night had far advanced and to our intense astonishment, we found that the dead city had become a living one pulsating with life and its activities !! Surrounded by my son and other relatives I remained there for a few days witnessing them dying at day break and reviving and carrying on life's activities after sun-set.

One night, my dear son was blamed for the fate of the city. They said that the king was all right till he married to the daughter of the king's high priest Veda-Sastra-Batta and set his foot in their city. His ill-luck had made their ruler lose his mental equilibrium for a moment and bring his city to its miserable condition.

Stung to the quick by the cruel taunts of the people my son committed suicide. His wife and father-in-law followed suit and my wife and his mother-in-law did not survive them long. I am the only wretch left alive and why should I live ? So, Good lady leave me and go back, lest I drag you too in the whirlpool of my misfortune.

Hearing these words of the poor old Brahmin, the lady was much moved. She said that she was the author of the curse the city lay under, but promised to release it from the sad curse, if he promised not to put an end to his existence.

The Brahman consenting, the curse on the city was removed and the people there were as happy as ever. But the king and the queen were not happy. The fate of their dear daughter made them sad and miserable. So Vikrama made up his mind to destroy the *Muni* and restore them their daughter.

Arriving at the place where the *Muni* had confined the princess, king Vikrama introduced himself to her and promised to kill the *Muni* and restore her to her parents if she would act up to his instructions.

She consenting, Vikrama advised her to worm the secret of the *Muni's* life out of him by proper coaxing and kind reception and impart it to him.

Soon after his temporary departure from her presence the *Muni* came there and besought her to become his wife and be his mistress. She smiled in reply and said that she would do so on his convincing her of his love.

At this the *Muni* was delighted. He said that he would ever lay down his life to win her love.

Pretending that she was highly pleased with this reply of the *Muni*, she told him with a show of deep concern that she was anxious for his safety, now that she has begun to love him.

The *Muni* having thrown off his guard said that she need not be anxious about it, since his life principle was not as in the case of others in his body, but was in a blue worm in the stomach of a huge tortoise.

Asked as to where the tortoise was and how an enemy could get the worm out of it and cause his death, he said as follows :—

“Far away from here there is a mountain named Mallikarjuna. In that mountain there is a cave, passage through which is difficult and dangerous. If one crossed it he would reach an open space. There he would find a Vinayakar temple. The tortoise is behind the image and one has to overturn it to get at it and which act also required great skill and power. If the tortoise is killed and the worm taken out of its stomach, I would become weak and powerless. If the worm is cut into two, I would then die.



As my life principle is so carefully guarded there is no fear that any one would put me to death easily."

The princess was delighted at this. She sent the *Muni* away, full of pleasing thoughts for the future.

Shortly Vikrama met her and learnt from her the secret of the *Muni's* life. He quickly reached the mountain riding on the shoulders of the Vampire. Guided by him, he reached the temple crossing the cave safely. Having obtained the permission of the temple guardian deity to overturn the image, he soon reached the tortoise. With one stroke of his sword, he killed it and took the worm out of its stomach having torn it open.

With the worm in his hand he reached the *Muni* riding on his Vampire. There he cut it into two and threw it before him. This caused the death of the *Muni*.

Returning to Varanapuri he restored the princess to her parents and returned to Ujjain having completed his tour.

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## CHAPTER XII.

## THE CELESTIAL HARP.

At the eve of the one of the half yearly stays in the capital city Ujjain, Vikrama's spies came and told him of a case which might prove worthy of his attention.

In the city called Tirumalpura there ruled a king named Dharmarayan. He had three sons and one daughter. After the king's death, the three princes desired to go on a tour of inspection of their country. Mounting on spirited horses from the royal stable the trio set out for the purpose. After a few days they reached a beautiful garden wherein were located three mansions with fine tanks in front of each. As they were tired after a long ride they resolved to pass the night there and proceed on their journey the next day.

Divesting themselves of their royal riding robes, they spread their beds each in one of the three mansions. After performing their daily evening ablutions in the tanks after sunset, they went to bed after an early supper of cakes and fruits they had brought with them.

The garden and the mansions belonged to three celestial damsels who used to spend their nights there. Going there as usual they were surprised to find three lovely youths sleeping in their places, closer examination turned their feeling of surprise into one of love. The selections of lovers by them did not present them any difficulty. The eldest chose the eldest of the princess, while the younger and the youngest acted in a similar manner. Having passed the night each in her lover's company, the three maidens at day dawn changed them into rocks by their magical power and departed for their celestial home. The same thing was repeated night after night, the celestial damsels restoring their lovers to their human forms during nights to keep their company and changing them into rocks when they had to depart at day-break !!!

One night, the youngest of the three princesses, happening to go out of the mansion was hailed by an effigy placed in a niche in the pillar of a portico. When he approached it, guided more by the voice he heard than by anything else, he was surprised to hear the effigy speak like human beings !! It opened his eyes to the doings of the three celestial damsels by describing the

way in which they were treating them to satisfy their selfish desires during nights!!!

Finding that he was willing to save himself and his brothers from the spell of these divine maidens, the effigy gave him some granules of a substance, advising him to depart with his brothers when the maidens were sound asleep. If they were to awake and pursue them, he was to throw one of the granules behind him whenever he found himself hard pressed by them and push on.

Returning to his companion maiden he watched her carefully. Finding that she was fast in the arms of slumber along with her two sisters, he softly stole from her side and approached his brothers who were fortunately awake. Having told them in a whisper to follow him outside, he proceeded in advance and saddled their horses, which were safe and sound, as the maidens used to provide them fodder every morning before their departure from the place.

Having told them briefly why it was necessary to run away from that place, he urged them to whip up their horses to elude pursuit warning them that if they were caught their doom would be sealed, since they would be turned

into stones by them in revenge to remain as permanently.

Before they had advanced a long distance one of the maidens woke up. Not finding her lover by her side she gave the alarm which brought the sisters together. Convinced beyond doubt that they were deserted by their lovers they grew mad with anger and gave chase to capture and punish them.

Finding that the maidens had gained considerable distance, the prince with the granule threw one of them behind. The effect was not only instantaneous but it was also marvellous !!

Bushes, rocks, rivers, and trees sprang up between the pursuers and the pursued impeding the progress of the former considerably.

The princes gained some distance over the pursuers but they were after a short while again gaining ground over them.

Another granule was thrown which created wild animals like bears, tigers, lions, elephants, boars and so on and impeded the progress of the pursuers !! Undaunted by them, and overcoming every obstacles the maidens came on pursuing them madly.

Using the granulés, snakes, centipedes,



scorpions and various other poisonous insects were raised behind them by the princes, but all to no purpose. The maidens kept pursuing them till day break. Then they gave up the chase and were about to depart for their celestial homes when an idea struck the eldest of them.

She suspected the youngest of them, since only her lover had the granules that were seen in the niche. Failing to take revenge on the deserters, they the elder and the eldest, caught hold of the youngest and mercilessly beat her to death. Throwing her corpse down they ran away from there. The youngest prince was seeing from a distance the punishment meted out to his partner. Filled with grief, he returned to the place where her corpse lay and was bemoaning her untimely and miserable death.

Lord Siva was fortunately passing by that way. Noticing the grief stricken prince with the corpse of the woman of his love, he was moved with pity. Using his power, he restored the dead maiden to life to the infinite joy of her lover.

Filled with gratitude for the kindness shown to her by her lover, the celestial maiden resolved to befriend him at all times. She told him

that she deeply appreciated his feeling of love towards her which made him return to her corpse and revive it though by chance. In return she would love him always.

Saying thus and having presented him with a celestial harp which she desired him to keep safe and thumb its strings whenever he desired her presence, the maiden took her departure.

Arriving at Indra's court she met her sister companions in amour who were filled with surprise at her return. As if nothing had happened, she extended her hands to them in all friendliness. They in their turn took them in their turn and everything went on as before as if nothing had happened.

Meanwhile we will follow the prince with the harp advancing towards his capital city. Soon after the departure of his lover the celestial damsel, he was slowly wending his way along the path by which his brothers were going. After a while he reached a wayside resthouse of which there were a large number along the route and halted to take rest there. With a view to test the efficacy of the *Vina* or the celestial harp, he thumbed it and the note emanating from it reaching the ears of

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the damsel, residing in Indra's city in the heavens, she forthwith hastened to him to keep his company. By her powers of creation, she was able to procure for them both not only a fine dinner but also the necessary beds, flowers, sandal paste and perfumes. Having passed the night with the prince the celestial damsel was about to depart from there, when a <sup>Yogi</sup> came there. He was smitten with her beauty and after her departure he approached our prince and begged him to procure him her love, promising to give him in return a magic sword which could destroy his enemies, however strong and numerous they may be.

The cunning prince got it from him and while pretending to be examining it, used it against the *Yogi* himself and killed him. → girdone

With the wonderful sword in his possession he continued his journey and alighted at the next way-side rest house. There also, the harp was thumbed, the presence of the maiden procured, and the night was passed pleasantly by the lovers. When the maiden was about to depart, she was noticed by another *Yogi* who promised him a bag of plenty in return for the maid's love. Having obtained possession of it

with the necessary instructions he killed him also and was passing on. On the way he halted at two more rest-houses and in both the places the previous occurrences happened to be repeated, resulting in his getting possession of a resurrection rod and a transporting sandal.

Arriving at his father's city, he was welcomed by his brothers and sister and was lodging in a separate mansion in the midst of a delightful garden, so that he might keep not only his wonderful articles obtained from the *Yogis*, but also his amour and secret meeting with the celestial dam, from the knowledge of others.

Using his *Marithra-Vina* he was procuring the presence of the celestial lady of his love whenever he chose and was passing his days pleasantly. Fearing that these happy days may not be going on for ever, the maiden had often advised her lover to keep the lyre very safe. She had also warned him to keep the doors of his mansion under lock and key whenever he chose to be out, so that his precious articles within may be safe and out of reach of the curiosity inclined.

Though he had followed her advice strictly for some time and took the key of the mansion

door with him, having locked the same whenever he went out, he after a time grew lax in his care and on occasions left the door not only open but also ajar when taking walks in the garden. On one such occasion, his sister who was out in the garden enjoying the cool and fragrant breeze there, saw the door of her brother's mansion standing ajar. Thinking that he was inside it, she pushed it open and went in. Finding that he was not there, she lingered there. Casting her eyes around, she noticed the sword. Taking it in her hand, she desired to use it. It chanced at the moment that a rat was running there and the sword, flying at it, cut it into two. Restoring it to its sheath, she took the resurrection rod and pushed the rate aside when lo ! it was restored to life, to her great astonishment !

Thinking that her brother might have kept valuables in the purse of plenty he put her hands in it and found it filled with what she thought that it might contain.

She next put her feet on the sandals and in doing so thought of her room and lo ! she found that she was there in a trice. Fearing that her brother might be angry, she wished herself back in his room to restore the sandal



to its place and to found herself there once more.

Admiring these wonderful things kept by her brother, she took the *Vina* lying there in her hand and thumbed its strings.

The celestial dame hearing the music, hastened to her lover, surprised at the summons from him at such an unusual hour. Finding that he was not there and seeing his sister in his place, she asked her what she was doing in her brother's chamber.

Surprised beyond measure at the sudden appearance there of such a beautiful woman and the questions put to her, she explained to her how she was led to thumb the strings of the *Vina* by curiosity in the absence of her brother.

Mad with anger at her lover's carelessness, she of the heaven-world broke the *Vina* to pieces and disappeared, leaving the message to him that he had brought about the loss of his happiness in future by his neglect of her advice.

Shortly after, the prince entered his chamber and found there his sister standing in front of the broken *Vina*, trembling with fear. Gather-

ing from her the particulars of the happenings and the message left him by his celestial lover, the prince, though filled with grief, resolved to win her back or die in the attempt.

Using the transporting sandal, he reached Indra's Court, where the three women the former lovers of the three princes were engaged in dancing. The minions of Indra, seeing a mortal there, attempted to push him out. Finding that their attempts were resisted, they brought the news to Indra who sent a large number of his brave men to bring him before him as a prisoner. When they approached our prince with a view to seize him, he using his magic sword cut them all to pieces.

Hearing of this Indra was filled with surprise. Approaching him in person, he asked who he was and what he wanted.

When he was told of the amour of the three damsels from his court he was angry. Summoning before him all the ladies in his court he desired the prince to identify them. When he did so, they were told by Indra to go with him and do as he desired them to do.

When Indra deplored the loss of his bravemen at his hands, our prince using his

resurrection rod restored them all the life to the great joy of Indra, who sent him back to his kingdom, not only with the three maidens but also with innumerable gifts.

On the way, he was surrounded by a huge fire since the divine law was that nothing from the heavens should pass its limits and Agni, the God of fire, was responsible to see that it was not violated. Carrying out the law, he now surrounded the prince and the celestial dames and they were about to be burnt to death.

News of this was brought to his brothers who were filled with grief. There was one way of saving their lives and that was very difficult to accomplish. If any one from the mortal world would offer himself as sacrifice in the fire, the fire God Agni would be satisfied and let them escape with their lives. When Vikrama heard of this from his spies, he forthwith summoned his Vampire and quickly reached the spot carried by him.

Having offered up his prayers to his deity Durga as also to Agni, he boldly plunged into the fire surrounding the prince and the celestial damsels. When lo ! there was no fire anywhere and Vikrama found himself standing with those

he had rescued !! Sending the rescued to their kingdom Vikrama returned to Ujjain.

The three maidens married the three princes, their former lovers and lived happily with them.

The three *Yogis* were restored to life using the resurrection rod. When they were offered their respective articles they declined them, saying that they have risen beyond worldly temptations, having learnt the severe lesson from giving way to worldly passions and desires.

So the princes, using those wonderful articles for the welfare of their subjects, ruled over them for many a long year.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE RAKSHASA OUTWITTED.

One night Vikrama and his minister Batti assuming different guises were patrolling the streets of Ujjain. Coming near the house of a woman who owned a restaurant, their ears were assailed by the pleasant song accompanying the strings of a lyre emanating from it. Thrilled with delight at the divine melody, Vikrama desired to know more of the singer and Batti said that his desire would be satisfied the next morning. With the dawn of the day, he sent one of his trusty messengers and had the singer brought to the king's palace. Suitable quarters were assigned to her in one of the numerous chambers in the king's harem. At the request of king Vikrama she exhibited her skill in the art of music. Filled with wonder and admiration at her performance and finding that she appeared ridiculously old to possess such a faculty in perfection, he held a private conversation with her, to learn her history. Questioned by him she told him as follows :—

She was the daughter of the king and queen of Tarkapuri born through the blessings of their



tutelary deity Durga. Being their only child endowed with extraordinary beauty and knowledge in music and other fine arts she was the apple of their eyes and highly beloved of all. One day, she was on the terrace of her palace surrounded by her maids when a powerful demon named Mrikangita, living in a cave in the mountain Mallikarjuna, was flying past her. Smitten by her great beauty he immediately fell in love with her and swore that he would come there on the ensuing day and carry her off to become his wife.

Filled with alarm on hearing him saying thus prior to his departure from there, the princess remained as if she were stunned for a very long time. Recovering herself and her presence of mind after sometime, she approached her parents and told them of the danger she was in.

They were in their turn filled with grief and dismay, since the demon was so powerful that he could resist even the combined efforts of the kings of the three worlds even. The only course left open for the princess to follow was to seek the assistance of the deity Durga and made up her mind to do it. One night, she reached the temple of the *devi*, invoked her presence by her

prayers and begged her to save her from the demon. The *devi*, though she was filled with pity at the distress of the princess, said that she was herself powerless against the demon since he had by his penance obtained more power than she could cope with. But she would advise her as to what she should do under the circumstances. She should forthwith proceed to Ujjain and tell king Vikrama its ruler about the demon and the danger she was in, on account of his unholy love for her. He would surely take steps to save her. To shield her from danger that might arise to her on her way to Ujjain on account of her youth and extraordinary beauty, she would change her appearance to that of an old woman ! Having thanked the Goddess for her blessings and assuming the guise of the old woman, she was on her way shortly. Reaching Ujjain, she found lodgings and food in the house from which she was brought to the palace by the orders of Batti. Hearing this Vikrama was delighted. He desired her to cast off the exterior form of the old woman and she did so. Seeing her ravishing beauty, Vikrama fell in love with her and married her, ere long with great pomp and ceremony.

Meanwhile the demon arriving at the palace where he had seen the princess was filled with dismay to find that the bird had escaped. He repented that he had not followed the advise conveyed in the proverb '*Don't put off till to-morrow that you can do today*' and thus had lost a lovely maiden. Regaining his composure, he took a vow that he would search for her everywhere and find out her whereabouts and force her into a marriage with him.

Apportioning out portions of the country to to be searched each day, he carried on his search for many days entering every nook and corner without finding the object of his search. He at last arrived at Ujjain<sup>7</sup> but was afraid to enter it boldly as he had done in other places. In the guise of a bangle-seller he was passing by the various streets of that city keeping his ears open to receive the news of the princess if any. Many women hailed him and desired to buy bangles from him. But the price he demanded was far too high and so they did not care to take any from him nor did he care to sell any to any of them. At last one woman said that the price was too high even for the new wife of king Vikrama when she gave out a certain

sum as the price of the bangles. This was indeed news for the demon bangle-seller. He was almost certain that this new wife of Vikrama was none else but the princess he was in search of. He should surely enter the harem and see this beauty. If she were the princess he was in search of, he would carry her off to his cave in a trice. But how was he to enter the harem guarded as it was, so well by trustworthy guards. He would send a pair of bangles to the beauty in question. When the price is settled, he would be admitted inside to put the bangle on her hand and then he would take the necessary steps to carry her off.

No sooner was it decided than it was put into practice. A pair of bangles was sent to the princess through Batti asking her whether she would like to have them. When she had signified her desire to have them, Batti offered to pay him the amount asked for it. But when the bangle-seller manifested his anxiety to put the bangles on the hands of the princess himself, his suspicion was aroused. The king had warned him about a demon who would attempt at carrying the princess off. This bangle-seller was perhaps that very demon in disguise. He

would therefore make him meet Vikrama himself.

Thus musing, Batti told the bangle-seller that on second thoughts he had come to the decision that such a high price demanded for the bangles should not be paid from the royal treasury without the express permission of the king himself. He would therefore do well to meet the king in the forest where he was just then touring and bring his permission. Feeling this check to his cherished object of meeting and carrying off the princess and thinking that he could easily bamboozle Vikrama and get the requisite permission to enable him to carry out his nefarious project, he hastened to the place in the forest where king Vikrama was. Seeing him come towards him, Vikrama asked his Vampire as to who the new-comer was. When he told him that he was none but the renowned demon Mrikangita coming to hoodwink him, Vikrama was ready for action. When the bangle-seller told about the desire of his new wife to possess herself of the new bangles and about Batti's objections to pay him the amount, he was ready with his reply and his sword. With the former he confounded the demon dis-



closing his identity suspected by Batti and with the latter, he cut off the demon's head at one stroke.

Returning shortly to his capital he narrated particulars of his adventures to his friends and others and lived happily with his wives and others.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### KING VIKRAMA'S SACRIFICE.

One day while Vikrama was seated in his court surrounded by his ministers and other nobles, it was announced to him that his secret messengers had returned bringing with them important news.

Ordered to be brought in before him, they were ushered in shortly. Approaching the dais whereon the king and others were seated, they made a low obeisance and submitted their report as follows :—

Oh mighty king ! In pursuance of your royal commands we visited various countries. Everywhere we heard nothing but praises for your majesty from the mouths of every one. Your majesty's valour is praised by some and the happiness of your majesty's subjects by others. Many also praise your majesty's self effacement and readiness to alleviate the miseries of others. Filled with satisfaction that no disparaging comments are being made on your majesty's administration anywhere over the length and breadth of the land, we reached

Benares. There we have found an opportunity for your majesty to show your majesty's self sacrifice to benefit others.

A merchant in that city named Darmasilan, after having spent vast sums in digging a big tank, is faced with the misfortune that its bed is quite dry, frustrating his desire to see it filled with water to benefit the people. One day, he in a desperate mood desired, to commit suicide because he had heard people say that he was a great sinner and so his efforts to fill the tank with water prove futile. But a voice from space told him that he need not despair. If he could find a ruler possessing all virtues combined in him who would offer his head as a sacrifice to the presiding deity of the place, his object would be fulfilled. Though he placed vast wealth at the disposal of the individual ready to become such a sacrifice, none has come forward till now. Every one thinks that his life is too precious to be sacrificed for the benefit of others. When Vikrama heard this, he was filled with delight. He would help this Darmasilan to gain his end.

Summoning his Vampire before him, he desired him to carry him to Benares forthwith.

Arriving there, he reached the tank excavated by Darmasilan and was filled with admiration at the magnitude of the undertaking. He felt that it was his duty to see that his attempt is not rendered fruitless, by lack of water in the tank. He would willingly and gladly become the sacrifice demanded to satisfy the presiding deity there. While he was musing thus, he noticed a temple near and there was a *Yogi* inside it. He pointed out to Vikrama that life in the mortal world was like a bubble and hence counted for nothing. "A flower at bloom in the morning is a faded thing in the evening" and life was after all akin to such a flower. These wise saws of the *Yogi* tickled Vikrama and added to his zest which needed no adding at all to effect the purpose on hand. Going to the very centre of the tank he drew his sword out of its sheath, and hewed off his head. When his royal blood soaked the soil there was a wonderful change. The tank was filled to the brim with crystal water and Vikrama was none the worse for the sacrifice. He was as hale and hearty as ever.

Gladdened by the sight of the tank filled to the brim, he was carried back to Ujjain by his Vampire. When Darmasila found the tank filled

with crystal water on the next day, he was filled with wonder. He was speculating as to how such a miracle could have been worked out when a voice from the space enlightened him on the point.

Filled with gratitude for the service rendered to him, he sent Vikrama ten gems of priceless value through trusty messengers. These guarded the gems at great risk to their lives from robbers and took them to Vikrama. As the messengers were five in number he gave each of them a gem and sent them to their country with a rich present for their king.

Immediately after the departure of the messengers, there came to him five poor Brahmans to whom he gave the remaining five gems, one gem each.

In this way king Vikrama added one more incident to perpetuate his selflessness and generosity and we will take leave of him for the present to meet him again shortly in another of his tour of adventures.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BRAHMAN RELEASED FROM THE JAWS OF THE CROCODILE.

The river Ganges flowing from the slopes of the Himalaya mountain though a sacred river is considered highly sacred on particular occasions. Then people flock to her banks in very large numbers to bathe in the sacred waters and get themselves purified of all their sins. Even kings and rulers were no exceptions to this custom and many of them had assembled there on one occasion.

The expounders of Vedic lore and Pandits specialised in moral science, taking advantage of the vast concourse of religiously disposed persons, were impressing upon the audience the glorious privilege of sacrificing one's life to save the life of another. The audience consisting of mostly of very brave rulers appeared to be much moved by these exhortations of the learned Brahmans and were perhaps waiting for a suitable opportunity to show the stuff they were made of.

A splendid opportunity presented itself to

put the precept quoted above into practice. The husband of a poor woman, while he was bathing in the sacred river, was unfortunately caught in the jaws of a crocodile. The woman in great alarm ran to the rulers assembled there and entreated their help to save her husband. The maxim '*Example is better than precept*' appealed to them strongly as a scientific dictum. When it came to a question of practice, it had its votaries very thin in number indeed. There was none among the assembled potentates who was prepared to risk his life in attempting to save the life of the Brahman from the jaws of the crocodile.

The poor woman was in despair. She rent the skies with her cries which ought to have melted even a heart of flint. But they created no impression on any of them. At last there was a stir among the crowd assembled there and a person of dignified and majestic appearance emerged out of it. Desiring the woman to show him the place where her husband was, he hastened after her with his drawn sword in his hand. Heedless of the possible risk to his life and bent only on saving the life of the poor Brahman he at once plunged into the water and

reached the spot where the Brahman was struggling hard to get himself free from the firm grasp of the crocodile. Even as Sri Krishna, who hastened to the rescue of his devotee the king of the elephants from the jaws of the crocodile, this doughty warrior who was none but Vikrama himself hastened to the succour of the poor Brahman.

With one stroke of his sword, he killed the aquatic monster and set the Brahman free. All marvelled at his intrepid coolness in danger and the Brahman and his wife were full of gratitude towards him. The Brahmin in return for the signal service rendered to him by Vikrama taught him a *mantra* or incantation and nine times repetition of which was to procure for him a celestial car in which one can roam anywhere at his will and pleasure ! On his way to Ujjain, Vikrama halted under a tree on which there dwelt a *rakshasa*. Seeing Vikrama there he threatened to eat him up. But Vikrama laughed him to scorn at which the *rakshasa* marvelled, since mortals till then used to run away from him in terror !! Then a slow but marvellous change took place in the *rakshasa*. His gigantic form shrank to the normal human

size and he remembered now his past history. He bowed low to Vikrama and told him that he was originally a learned Brahman leading a vicious life which brought on him the curse to remain as a *brahma-rakshasa* till relieved from it by a human being who would not fear him.

He solicited for and obtained from Vikrama the *mantra* taught him by the Brahman recently. Repeating it nine times, he obtained the celestial car mounting which he departed to take a pleasure trip over the three worlds !!

King Vikrama returned to Ujjain, and after propitiating Durga resumed the administration of his kingdom.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE CAUSE OF THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH DISCLOSED.

One day, when Vikrama was holding court, there came to him from a certain country a warrior with a piece of news capable of rousing his ardent spirit of adventure. He told him that in the country of the Aryans there dwelt a woman who married a husband daily to find him a husband corpse the next day !!!

Delighted with the news that held out hopes of adventure, Vikrama with the aid of his Vampire reached the country of the Aryans and sent word to Kamalareka that he would take the place of a husband to her on the next day. Filled with delight by the preference given to her by the renowned Vikrama, she made grand preparations for his reception. On his arrival the formalities of the marriage were gone through. When night fell, Vikrama was shown the bed-room assigned to him by his wife. Finding his bed spread on a couch, he desired the same to be spread on the floor saying that he might perhaps fall down in sleep and hurt



himself. At this, his wife laughed thinking that he who would be no more next morning fears that he might fall down from a couch in sleep. Though Vikrama knew the reason which elicited this laughter, yet he remained silent. Husband and wife were talking over several subjects over some games and at last Kamalareka said that she was sleepy. Permitting her to sleep, Vikrama put a pillow near her and remained concealed in a corner with his drawn sword. Shortly a tiny serpent issued out of Kamalareka's nose and bit the pillow several times taking it for a human being. The cause of the death of so many was now known and so Vikrama with his sword cut the serpent into two and threw it into a corner. He then went to bed and slept soundly till daybreak. Day dawned and people as usual were ready outside with the paraphernalia of death to carry the corpse to the cremation ground to be disposed of. When they found Vikrama alive, hale and hearty, their surprise knew no bounds. The ominous articles of death were at once removed and Vikrama received congratulations at his escape from death. As they were eager to know the cause of the death of so many before his arrival he

showed the pieces of the snake he had thrown in a corner and said that that poisonous creature issuing out of her nostrils stung to death all persons who had the misfortune to be her companions during the previous nights. When he explained to them the strategem by which he escaped a similar fate and killed the snake, they admired his plan, and praised him very much, Kamalareka herself felt at his feet and thanked him over and over again for having rid her of the serpent and the odium it was creating in her.

Having fulfilled the business he had come there for, namely, to find out the cause of the mysterious death and remove it if possible, Vikrama returned to his city to assume the reins of the government left temporarily in the hands of Batti and other ministers.

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Same year had  
see page

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TACTICS OF THE MAIDEN NAVAMOHINI.

One day Vikrama's spies returned from distant lands and a batch of them went to him with wonderful news furnishing him with adventure. There reigned in the northern countries a king named Somapratapan in his capital city Maharapuri. He was a wise ruler beloved of his subjects. His country abounded in precious gems and consequently people used them in large quantities casting off the evil eye when the king went round the city in procession.

Rice boiled in milk and sugar were freely mixed with precious gems in large quantities in each house, and brought near the king's car when it passed by the houses. Waving the vessels containing it before the car, they threw the contents in a dustbin. Next day the rubbish carts took it from the dustbins in the several streets, carried it outside the city limits and left it there. After sunset, a large number of goblins assembled there to eat the rice. They carried away the gems

after finishing their meal on the rice. Led by curiosity to ascertain where the gems were carried, a spy followed them. They all went up a huge banian tree and after a while disappeared from view. Hearing the news, Vikrama thought that its investigation was worthy of being engaged in, determined to proceed to the spot and unravel the mystery. Entrusting the management of his country to the minister, he desired his Vampire to carry him to the city Maharapuri. There mingling with the crowd in the royal procession, he observed the ceremony of casting off the evil eye. Large quantities of pearls, corals, rubies, diamonds and other precious gems with cakes of diverse kinds and boiled, freely mixed with currants and other dried fruits were thrown into the dustbins by the people after taking them round the car thrice. He then proceeded to the place where these were left by the rubbish carts and watched the goblins. Having eaten their fill, they gathered the gems, etc. and hastened away. Vikrama followed them with drawn sword to the place where there was the big tree. When the goblins climbed upon it, Vikrama

too followed their example. But to his surprise he found himself alone on the tree and the goblins had disappeared. He then prayed fervently to Goddess Durga and solicited her help. In response to his prayers, she caused him to be carried to the city of the princess of the goblins by her minions and left in a street there. Finding himself in the street of a splendid city, he went along it and soon reached a mansion which he thought might belong to the ruler of the country nor was he mistaken. The mansion belonged to the lovely Mohini princess of the goblins.

Entering it, he soon reached a splendid bath-room with everything ready to enjoy the luxury of a bath. Divesting himself of his robes, he plunged himself into the delightfully scented and refreshing water kept ready. Coming out of the bath, he put on his dress again, and advanced to another room where dinner was kept ready. As he was hungry, he partook enough of it. Having satisfied his hunger, he reached the next chamber which happened to be the bed-chamber of the princess with a nice bed in it. Feeling sleepy he lay on it and soon fell asleep. Shortly after,



the princess Mohini entering her bath found that some one had been at it. When she went into the kitchen after her bath, she missed a portion of the meal and her delicate tit bits of cakes, etc. Surprised at these, she went into her bed-chamber and there to her intense astonishment, she found a mortal sleeping on her bed. Recovering from her surprise and angry at the impudence of Vikrama, she directed one of her attendant goblins to take him and throw him outside the limits of her dominion, namely at the banian tree. Obeying the commands of his mistress, the goblins visited Vikrama bodily from the bed and carried him to the banian tree. Awakened by the action of the goblin and finding himself in the grasp of that creature, Vikrama grew angry. Drawing out his sword, he cut the goblin in two, and attempted to re-enter the mansion. Many other goblins opposed his entry, but were put to death by him.

Entering the bed-chamber, he found Mohini there sleeping. He directed his Vampire to transport him and her to Ujjain with the bed she was sleeping on and his direction was obeyed by that trusty servant. Finding herself

in a strange place next morning when she awakened from her sleep, Mohini was filled with surprise. When she came to know that the individual whom she desired one of her goblins to throw outside her city was king Vikrama and that she was then in his palace and power she did not know what to do. She finally made up her mind to reconcile to her lot and became the wife of a mortal king. King Vikrama was anxious to make her his wife for she was very beautiful ; but a Brahman bachelor begged him to bestow the woman on him.

Never in the habit of refusing anything to any applicant, she gladly bestowed the princess Mohini on him and granted him the necessary wealth to maintain her suitably.

Every one praised him for his generosity and unselfishness and prayed to God to give him long life add glory.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A FATHER'S ENIGMATIC INSTRUCTIONS.

One day while Vikrama was holding his court, there came before him four brothers, sons of one Neethiparan, reputed to have died very rich. Their father at the time of his death summoned them near him and having said the following words gave up his ghost :—

“My dear sons, after my death bestow all the cows in charity ; divide equally among you the brass vessels under a leg of my sleeping cot; and leave the gold coins found under another of its legs to the care of your eldest brother who is thrifty and who would live only on what he earned without encroaching upon the capital. Live all of you taking a lesson from the example of rose-water.” When the old man's funerals were over, they desired to carry out his wishes.

Removing the cot from its place they dug under its legs and came upon a pot of bones, a pot of coal, a pot of pebbles, and a pot of rose-water and nothing else. Where were they to find the cows to be disposed of in charity ? Where were the vessels to be divided equally

among them ? Where were the gold coins to be entrusted to the eldest ? what did he mean by saying that they should take a lesson from rosewater. They were at their wits' end and finally came to Vikrama to get his advice. They found fault with their departed parent for having left them nothing but the pots and their useless contents while he was reputed to have been very rich at the time of his death. *Moh. Khalil W.*

King Vikrama pacified them and went with <sup>13</sup> them to their house. There he desired them to dig deeper under the four pots. When they did so they came upon another four pots exactly below each of the above four pots. The pot under the bones contained a parchment directing them to the place where the cows, as many in number as there bits of bones in the above pot, were left to be taken care of. The pot under the charcoal contained plenty of gold coins coated over with dust; while the parchment in the pot under the pebbles furnished them with the spot where the vessels were kept hidden in the house.

As regards the figurative advice left to them, he told them, that rosewater was very light and so was easily evaporated when exposed to the

sun. If they were allowed themselves to be light like that water and went to law courts represented by the figurative use of the word sun, they would be worth nothing eventually. His father further desired them to be happy living together which idea too is conveyed to them by the example of the cool rose-awter.

The brothers praised the wisdom of king Vikrama and expressed their feelings of gratitude to him. The cows were only disposed of in charity and the vessels were got out of their resting places to be distributed equally among them. Entrusting the wealth to the eldest they all lived together amicably as desired by their father and never went to lawyers and law courts.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### A PLUNGE INTO THE BOILING WATER.

In the city of Sringarapura, there reigned a ruler named Vrathasila. He had a beautiful daughter named Veeralakshmi. When she was of sufficient age to be given in marriage, her father invited all the princes and noble youths, living far and near, to choose a bridegroom from among them. But a difficulty presented itself in the matter of choice after they had all come and assembled at the royal palace. The queen desired her son-in-law a scion of the royal family endowed with beauty though he may happen to be sansmind and intelligence; while the king desired her daughter to marry one who was wise though bereft of beauty and high social rank. As the princess would not express any desire of hers in the choice of a husband for her, the parents did not know what to do. They at last decided to submit the would-be candidates for their daughter's hand to a divine test. They had a huge cauldron filled with boiling oil and said that their destined son-in-law should plunge into it and come out unscathed.

The decision was duly proclaimed and the assembled princes and others were filled with surprise at such a strange method of choosing a son-in-law. Days passed and tons and tons of fuel were used up to keep the oil boiling. No one came forward to risk his life in winning the hands of the princess. News of this was brought to Vikrama by a Brahman priest who was there on a religious tour, satiated with the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Ever on the alert to go after deeds of bravery and adventure, Vikrama, carried on the shoulders of his Vampire, was soon near the cauldron of boiling oil. Putting his trust in his tutelary deity the Goddess Durga and relying on her protection, he jumped into the boiling oil in the cauldron to the wonder and admiration of a huge crowd assembled there and came out of it unscathed, thanks to the protecting hand of Kali ! When the news of this wonderful deed reached the ears of the king and queen, they were filled with joy. Hastening before the destined bridegroom of their daughter, Vikrama, they welcomed him heartily and took him to their palace. There he was accommodated right royally and on an

auspicious hour was married to the princess, their daughter.

After a sufficiently long stay in his father-in-law's house, he returned to his capital city with the newly-married wife who was duly introduced to the other ladies of the harem.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### THE THREE WONDERFUL PERFORMANCES.

While Vikrama was on his six months' tour in search of adventures, he came to a city called Chakrapura enveloped in gloom because its ruler Chaturyavan had just then died of snake bite. His queen filled with grief at the loss of her dear husband was ready to enter the fire and thus put an end to her miserable existence thereafter.

As the king and queen were ruling wisely doing justice to every one of their subjects, deep grief was depicted in the countenance of one and all on account of this loss to their country. They were lamenting over the fate of their ruler whose only concern in life was the welfare of the subjects entrusted to his care by the Almighty. Taking in at a glance how matters stood, Vikrama approached the queen who was about to enter the fire and bade her desist saying, 'Oh virtuous lady, grieve not for thy husband for we will surely see that he is restored to life and thee.' Then taking out the resurrection wand bestowed on him by Kali to be used at his discretion, he restored the

dead king Chaturyavan to life to the surprise and intense joy of one and all. The queen fell at Vikrama's feet and hailed him as their benefactor while the king in gratitude bestowed on him his kingdom and everything he stood possessed of. Vikrama in return bestowed them back to the king as his dowry for the queen his wife, and thus satisfied the peculiar scruples they had.

Proceeding from Chakrapura having taken an affectionate farewell from its king and queen, Vikrama reached a temple called Sambusurya. Having worshipped the deity there, he was about to depart when he saw a prince in charge of four guards. Finding him bound with chains, he enquired of them as to the nature of the crime he had committed to be treated thus. The guards desired Vikrama to address the prisoner himself and obtain the information from his own lips.

When questioned by Vikrama the prisoner said that he was tricked into a game of dice by his enemies with a Brahman and deprived of his kingdom and everything he possessed. He was now to be shut up in that temple to undergo all sorts of hardships.



This narrative moved Vikrama to pity the poor prince. He directed the guards to set their prisoner free. He then went with them all to the Brahman dicer and forced him to play at dice again. With the help of his Vampire, Vikrama made the prince win his kingdom back. He then sent for his enemies and told them who he was. He gave them the choice either to live in friendly relationship with the prince or to wage war with him. They preferred to do the former as the latter was not in their usual line of activity. Vikrama then desired to find some wealth for this prince protigee of his.

Hearing that there were a temple near containing untold of wealth, he forthwith repaired thither. It was written there that a human sacrifice should be offered to the *Kali* there to get possession of the wealth buried under the image of Kali. Vikrama at once made up his mind to become the sacrifice himself. Making out his sword, he was about to cut off his own head, when Kali appeared before him and bade him desist. She stepped aside to permit Vikrama to remove the treasures. With the aid of his Vampire, he had them taken to the

prince whose delight and gratitude knew no bounds.

After a short stay with him, Vikrama desired his Vampire to carry him back to Ujjain. Arriving there he narrated his adventures to his ministers and others and received the congratulations of one and all.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### AN ADEPT NECROMANCER.

King Vikrama desiring to go to Benares and bathe in the holy waters of the Ganges there made the necessary preparations. As all the nobles of his court desired to bear him company, they all set out from Ujjain on an auspicious hour and reached Benares in due time. Having bathed in the waters of the sacred river there, they reached the accommodation arranged for them. After the dinner was over, they were all sitting and talking pleasantly when a Necromancer came there. Having paid his respects to them all, he approached Vikrama, made a low obeisance to him and said, "Oh mighty king, Vikrama, I am the king of necromancers and desire very much to exhibit my skill before you ; since you yourself are thoroughly versed in all such arts and hence could appreciate it properly." Ever considerate to the feelings of others and delighted at the opportunity that presented itself to amuse his friends, Vikrama gave the necromancer permission to exhibit his skill. Thereupon he told the king that he had an urgent business

and would be back in a short while and disappeared in space to the amazement of all.

Shortly a warrior riding on a milk-white horse was seen approaching them. He had a lady with him. Approaching Vikrama, he gave out that he was a *sirdar* or in other words the commander over ten thousand horsemen in the military of the Emperor of Delhi. Owing to certain differences of opinion between him and the Emperor, he had to resign his appointment. He was then without any employment and would like to take service under Vikrama if he would condescend to take him under him. While he was thus talking, there came a messenger with the news that the enemies of Vikrama were advancing towards him with a large army and that he should take immediate steps to ensure his safety. Vikrama had no enemies whatever and so was surprised at this news. But the *Sirdar* seeking service under him said that he would single-handed go against the enemy, annihilate them, and return to him in no time. Saying thus and having requested him, to take fatherly care of the woman with him who he said was his wife, he rode away. Shortly there fell before them, heads and trunks

of horses and men covered with blood and gore ; with them there fell also the head and trunk of the *sirdar* and his white horse. Seeing them, his wife left in the care of Vikrama ran towards them with the piercing shriek and disappeared along with everything. The next moment the *sirdar* approached Vikrama on his white horse and told him that he had destroyed his enemies. When he desired to have his wife back, Vikrama had to explain to him how she had disappeared. At which the *sirdar* shook his head and said that he ought to have known better since she was too beautiful to any one to resist temptation. While he was talking thus he disappeared and there stood before the audience the necromancer himself smiling and triumphant !! Everyone present was filled with amazement and Vikrama sent him away with rich presents.

Shortly after, he in company with the others, returned to his capital city Ujjain and was welcomed right royally by one and all.

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## CHAPTER. XXII

### RESTORING A BOY AND A GIRL TO LIFE.

There lived in the city of Ujjain a rich merchant who had amassed considerable fortune by trade. Convinced beyond doubt that his vast wealth would be worse than useless if it be not spent in good ways, he had built temples, opened rest-houses and did many other acts of charity. Finally he made up his mind to go to Benares to be purified of his sins by bathing in the waters of the sacred river Ganges.

Combining business with religious aim, he consigned merchandise to carry on trade there. Having sold his goods realising much gain and having completed the necessary religious rites and ceremonies to be rid of his sins, he was on his way back to his city. Happening to enter a temple on the way, he noticed in one of the passages there, two children, a male and a female, lying dead with their throats cut from ear to ear !! Horrified at the sight, he looked around to understand the probable origin of the tragedy and saw there

a huge cauldron in which oil was boiling. There was also a plate of metal lying there with the inscription, 'He who desires to restore the dead children to life should plunge into the boiling oil and be swimming in it for an hour.' Taking possession of the plate, he hastened to the court of Vikrama. Handing him the plate, he described to him what he saw there. As nothing delighted Vikrama more than brave and self sacrificing deeds of chivalry and courage, he immediately got himself transferred to the temple described by the Brahman.

Finding the cauldron full of boiling oil and the two dead children by its side a wave of pity and compassion passed over his body. Set his life at naught and carried away by the noble impulse of restoring the children to life, he forthwith without any hesitation plunged into the boiling oil, having uttered a short prayer to his deity the Goddess Durga to attract her notice to him and his heroic deed.

The boiling oil instead of scalding him to death remained cool and refreshing to him by the grace of the tutelary deity ! He remained in the boiling oil for an hour to the astonishment of the vast concourse of people

there. The dead children revived in a miraculous manner and were restored to their parents whose joy knew no bounds.

Having performed this heroic deed Vikrama returned to his capital where he was received with great pride and satisfaction by one and all of his subjects.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### HOW VIKRAMA CAME TO SUCCOUR THE BIRDS IN TROUBLE.

The ruler of Ujjain Vikrama, in one of his peregrinations, came under the spreading branches of a huge banian tree on whose branches dwelt many a colony of birds of different species. Feeling rather tired, he seated himself on a piece of rock there and was enjoying not only the cool shade there but also the fragrance-laden gentle breeze.

While in that posture he noticed a tiger pursuing a deer running for its life. Quite tired and unable to continue the flight any longer, the poor deer would soon have become a prey to the blood-thirsty striped quadruped of the forest but for the prompt and decisive action of Vikrama. Jumping down from his seat and drawing out his mighty sword, he attacked the fierce brute, killed it and saved the life of the poor deer. Not content with this act of mercy he gathered a handful of tender grass to the tired deer and fed it kindly. He then brought some water from the adjoining brook in a cup

of leaf for the tired and helpless creature to drink. Saved from its enemy and revived by these acts of mercy from Vikrama, the deer licked the hands of its benefactor and ran away to an adjoining ticket.

The birds on the tree were observing all these and concluded, that the benefactor of the deer was none but Vikrama of whom they had heard.

They forthwith desired their king to approach him and solicit his help to rid them of the troubles of the demon Dushkara, the bird-eater.

Approaching Vikrama with a few chosen representatives of the several tribes of birds, the king of birds fell at Vikrama's feet and said, 'Oh Vikrama, the redresser of wrongs and the protector of the oppressed, do thou listen to our misery and stretch out a helping hand. On the other side of your lake there dwells a demon named Dushkara. Every day he dines upon a very large number of birds and if he continues to do so for sometime more there will be no birds left in the forest.'

Hearing this sad tale from the king of birds, Vikrama bade him and the other representatives



have no fear promising to destroy the demon and ensuring their safety. Carried by his Vampire, he soon reached the place where the demon told by the king of birds had taken his residence. A fierce fight ensued between him and the demon in which the latter was slain.

Returning to the birds, and having told them of the demon's death, he took leave of them and returned to his capital city.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE GODDESS CONFERRING BOON THROUGH VIKRAMA.

One summer day, Vikrama was staying in a mansion in the middle of his pleasure garden when a Brahman named Lakshmisanmanan came to him and told him as follows :—

“Oh mighty king, beloved of the Goddess Durga, listen to me. I was performing severe penance and austerities for many months together invoking the presence of Devi. Though she did not show herself before me, yet she appeared to me in my dream and directed me to you. So I have come to you as ordered by her.” When Vikrama heard this, he was filled with delight. Knowing by the wonderful power he possessed what the Brahman desired to obtain from Devi invoking her presence, he was able to satisfy him completely in his desires even without being told by him what he wanted.

The Brahman, filled with wonder and admiration, saluted him humbly and having given expression to his feelings of gratitude took leave of him and departed.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE LOVERS BROUGHT TOGETHER.

There lived in the city of Vijianagar a learned man named Kamala Sastri. His son by name Sampathkumara Sastri, though born of wise parents, did not pay any attention to learning. Living a lazy life of luxury and ease, he became an eye-sore to his father who had to rebuke him sharply on more occasions than one. Stung to the quick by his father's taunts, Sampathkumara Sastri one day left his father's house determined to return only having secured complete knowledge in Veda and Sastras. Having wandered here and there in search of a suitable teacher, he at last came to a learned Pandit by name Sastra Sura. Serving him faithfully and obediently, he learned from him everything and was returning to his father to gladden his heart.

On the way, he arrived at a place called Kalahasti and was passing along one of its streets. Noticing on the terrace of a mansion a lovely woman, he immediately fell in love with her and she too was not indifferent to his love.

While he was about to enter the house with a view to hold conversation with her, he was dissuaded from doing so by the people standing there. They said that she was possessed and that the *Muni* abiding in her was in the habit of killing any one who approached her.

Terrified at the information he turned back though consumed by love and reached the court of Vikrama. Questioned by him about his long absence from the city, he told him, how rebuked by his father, he went out to gain learning and wisdom and how on returning he met with the woman from whom he was scared away. When Vikrama heard of the love of the poor Sastri for the woman, he resolved to bring about their union. Borne on the shoulders of the Vampire, they two reached the woman's mansion. Entering it, they were welcomed by her and magnificently entertained. When the woman expressed her concern for his safety as well as the safety of the Brahman she had fallen in love with, Vikrama told her who he was and that she need not be anxious, since he could easily destroy the *Muni* in her. Even while they were talking, the *Muni* came there and attempted to kill Vikrama and the Brahman. Meeting him

to with his drawn sword, Vikrama cut the *Muni* to pieces and removed the fear from the woman's heart.

Having brought about the marriage of the woman with the Brahman youth Vikrama returned to his capital.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### KING VIKRAMA OBTAINING BOON FROM THE BRAHMAN *YOGI*.

There was a temple of Kali built of fine marble, on the slopes of the mountain Chitraguthi. A Brahman *Yogi* was doing penance in front of it and heaps and heaps of ashes were found there of fire which he had kindled to offer sacrifices in. He was observing further a strict vow of silence. Clarified butter was falling down in a torrent from a side of the mountain valley adjoining the temple. When news of this was brought to Vikrama, he forthwith set out to the place on his Vampire. Arriving there, he was convinced that the fall of the torrents of ghee was due to the pleasure of Kali and bathed in it when lo ! the fall of ghee was changed into a fall of milk ! Thinking that the change too was the result of Kali's work, he approached the Brahman *Yogi* and questioned him as to what he was aiming at in doing penance there.

Understanding from him that his attempts at invoking the presence of Kali had proved

fruitless, Vikrama was filled with compassion for the poor Brahman and resolved to obtain for him the boons he desired to have from Kali. Having bathed in the river there, he invoked the presence of Durga with his prayers but she did not come to him then. So taking out of its sheath his sword, he was about to cut off his head to sacrifice himself to Kali to please her, when she appeared before him and bade him desist, promising to bestow on him the boons he desired.

Falling at his feet, he begged that the desire of the Brahman *Yogi* may be satisfied. Kali said that she did not appear to him because his penance was not steady and one-pointed and yet to please Vikrama she would grant him the boons he desired to have.

Having obtained his heart's desire, the Brahman *Yogi* was filled with delight. Having expressed his gratitude to Vikrama had offered his prayers to Kali. He took his departure from there while Vikrama retired to his capital city and narrated his adventures to Batti and others from whom he received hearty congratulations.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE LIBERALITY AND GENEROSITY OF KING VIKRAMA.

There was a big merchant named Danadatta in the city of Shampakapuri. Possessed of untold of wealth and plenty of gems of very high value, he one day paid a visit to Vikrama and presented him with some of his gems as royal gifts. Desiring to possess ten gems of high value and merit which the merchant said that he had at home, he sent his trusted men to bring them before the expiry of that week. Going with the merchant to his abode in a rather distant place from there, they obtained possession of the gems. While returning, they found to their dismay that a river which they had to cross was full of flood and was dangerous. As their king had desired them who were five in number to return within the week that was passing it was very necessary for them to cross the river without delay and loss of time.

When they appealed to the boatmen there to ferry them over the river, they declined

to do so saying that the attempt was dangerous. But when the messengers told them of the urgency of the case they said that they would risk their lives in ferrying them over provided they handed them over five of the gems to enable them to make provision for their dependants against fatal results for themselves.

The messengers handed them the five gems and were ferried across the river safely. Reaching the presence of Vikrama, they placed before him the five gems and narrated the particulars resulting in their parting away the five other gems.

Pleased with the devotion of the messengers, he approved of their action and sent them away having given one gem to each of them.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### VIKRAMA'S NOBLE NATURE STANDS REVEALED.

There dwelt in Ujjain a Brahman named Somaswami who married a wife named Gunavathi. Many years of married life did not result in the birth of a son or daughter to them. One day Gunavathi addressing her husband said, "My Lord ! you are so wise that you can know the present, the past, and the future. Do thou exercising your powers discover the cause of my barrenness'.

Somaswami thereupon using his special faculty found out the cause and told her to worship God to shake off her sterile curse, doing which, she was blessed with a son.

This son tenderly nurtured by his parents grew into a fine youth and became proficient in all sciences and arts. Betaking himself to the slopes of a mountain, he was engaged in doing penance there.

One day King Vikrama out hunting in the forests there come to his hermitage with all his retinue.

The Brahmin welcomed them all and treated



them to a banquet of fruits and of the forest productions

Having rested there sufficiently long, the king with his retinue departed from there, taking the Brahman also with him.

Arriving at his palace, king Vikrama in return for the obligation of the Brahmin bestowed on him wealth and comfort. Time passed on and the Brahmin was a constant visitor in king Vikrama's court and was highly respected by all.

Overcome by the desire to test the noble quality of the king to whom he owed so much wealth and happiness, the Brahmin one day stole Vikrama's child and kept it effectively concealed in his house.

Missing the child from the palace, a vigorous search was carried on by the king's minions. In their active search for the missing child they were led to suspect the Brahmin since he was said to have been last seen with the child of the king.

The Brahmin was therefore seized by the king's guards and taken before him. Questioned by Vikrama, the Brahmin said that in a moment of temptation, he murdered his child and begged his pardon.

Asked as to what the temptation was, the Brahmin said that the costly ornaments on the child's person constituted the source of the temptation to appropriate them having committed murder.

The king instead of being provoked to wrath at this wicked conduct of the Brahmin, felt a deep pity for him. He told him mildly that he need not have committed the murder unnecessarily. If he had but asked them of him, he would gladly have given them to him. As a king he was bound to punish him for the crime committed, yet as he had received help at his hand, he could not find it in his heart to do so.

Having advised him not to do any such foolish act in future, he desired him to depart.

At this noble and generous behaviour of the king, the Brahmin was moved to tears. Controlling his emotion he told the king that his child was safe in his house and that he had pretended to have murdered it only to test him.

The king was glad to hear that his friend the Brahmin had not stained his hand in crime.

The child was restored to its parents and there was joy everywhere.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### VIKRAMA'S TIMELY HELP.

Once there lived in the city of Mallikapura a king named Prasannan who had a lovely daughter named Chitrareka. Hearing of the mighty *Vishnu* God on the Brahmin kite Garuda, she took a vow that she would marry only him and none else.

A Brahmin named Sowri fell desperately in love with her and resolved to marry her by recouring to a strategm. Approaching a skilful architect named Viswabrahma, he procured a wooden kite capable of flying with the aid of mechanism concealed in its body! Mounting on it, he one day alighted before her, while she was in the terrace of her palace and said that he was God Vishnu himself come to wed her, being pleased with her devotion to him and the goddess-like beauty she was endowed with. The princess easily allowed herself to be taken in by this strategm of the Brahmin and consented to marry him. Directed by her, he approached her father and gained his consent also for the union of his daughter with him.

The marriage was duly celebrated on an auspicious hour with due pomp and ceremony.

Days passed on and the princess was under the false impression that she had actually married God Vishnu himself.

One day a mighty army led by an enemy of King Prasanna advanced to capture the city of Mallikapura and put its ruler to death. Advancing to meet the enemy and give him battle, king Prasannaraman sustained a signal defeat and his army was retreating in all directions. Not knowing what to do, he told his daughter to ask her husband to advance against his enemy and defeat him.

Hearing of the service required of him, the Brahmin was filled with despair; for fighting was not in his line of activity. As he had heard many speak highly of Vikrama and his bravery and generosity, he hastened to him and begged him to come to help of his father-in-law besieged in his city by his enemy.

Vikrama told him to keep the guise of Vishnu and follow him. Carried on the shoulders of his Vampire he hastened to the rescue of king Prasannan. Plunging into the midst of his enemies, he created such a panic in

them that they beat a hasty retreat in all directions.

Arriving at his capital city after this adventure King Vikrama desired to perform a horse-sacrifice. He sent a Brahmin to the Lord of the ocean, soliciting his help.

The Lord of the ocean hearing of the intended horse-sacrifice by Vikrama, sent to him by the Brahmin four valuable gems to be made use of in performing the sacrifice.

When the gems were brought to him, Vikrama gave one of them as a present to the Brahmin for his troubles.

Desiring to show the virtues of the unique ~~games~~ to his relations the Brahmin, with Vikrama's permission, took all the gems to his house. There his relatives quarrelled over the gems, each claiming one for himself. Unable to come to any decision, they all came before Vikrama who laughed hearing quarrel over ~~game~~ not theirs at all.

In the end, in the goodness of his heart, he bade the claimants retain the gems each coveted and sent them away.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### A CURIOUS MODE OF INVITATION.

In the forest adjoining Ujjain, there came a huge and mighty wild boar destroying people and causing immense havoc and destruction everywhere.

Hearing of it, Vikrama hastened to the forest to hunt it to death. As the sun had set when he reached the place where the brute had recently played its pranks, he had to enter deeper into the forest to beard the monster in its lair.

Guided by the track left by the animal, Vikrama and his attendants reached a thicket where it had taken shelter for the night.

Roused from its comfortable quarters by the shouts and weapons of the party the boar ran for its life hotly pursued by Vikrama and the other brave hunters.

In a short while, all were left behind but Vikrama, who mounted as he was on a good horse, gave chase.

Coming to the mouth of a cave in a mountain at Chandragiri, the animal which was

obviously making for it, plunged into it and disappeared from view.

Slipping down the horse, Vikrama with drawn sword, followed it inside the cave. After proceeding a pretty long distance he discovered a flight of steps leading to the nether world as he thought.

Descending a large number of them, he reached an open plain leading to a mansion whose door was left open. Entering it, he came to a court where a Rakshasa king was seated surrounded by his officers.

The boar who was only a Rakshasa officer in disguise was heard by Vikrama to say to his king that he had obeyed his orders and that the ruler of Ujjain was coming after him and would be before him ere long.

Hastily rising from his seat the Rakshasa ruler advanced to meet Vikrama and welcome him to his kingdom. Having made him sit on his throne he explained to the bewildered king that he desired to see him very much; and hence had him brought before him by a stratagem fearing that he might not be prepared to go over there on a formal invitation. He then took him to the place where the

renowned Emperor Bali was, who received him heartily.

Having kept him with him for pretty long time, he sent him back to his city with some jugs of *Amritha* or nectar which possessed the miraculous future of restoring the dead to life and curing men of all forms of disease !!

Having restored to life those that were destroyed by the boar, Vikrama was proceeding to Ujjain. On the way he met a man whose son' was ailing from a virulent form of leprosy. Having given them a jug of nectar with the necessary instructions he returned to his capital to the great joy of his subjects.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### WISDOM THROUGH CELESTIAL DAMES.

In the prosperous reign of Vikrama there lived in his court a minister named Yukthi-Sekar. Denied the blessings of a child even after many years of wedded life, he in company with his wife performed many an act of charity and goodness. No sacred place or religious centre was left unvisited by them and in the end they gained what they were longing for.

A son was born to them and he was brought up in the lap of luxury as it were. He was the apple of his parent's eye and so was accustomed to a good deal of indulgence from them. The result was that he grew into a big dunce and his name had become a bye-word for stupidity.

One day, taunted by some that he was a dunce, he was filled with shame. Quickly making up his mind to travel abroad and return a wise man he set out on a long journey. After many days travel, he reached the banks of the river Godavari. Walking along it, he soon reached a temple. Entering it, he found a river full of boiling water flowing there !! The water

was so hot that the birds flying over the river fell down dead. Rice immerced in it, got cooked in a few minutes ! Surprised at this wonderful phenomenon he was carrying there for some time.

One day he noticed eight celestial dames alighting there to worship the god in the temple. The same thing was repeated for a number of days without the dames noticing his presence there.

While about to depart after their worship on a particular day, he was noticed by them. Approaching him they asked him who he was and what he was doing there.

After hearing his history they told him that the place was forbidden to mortals, and that as he was a good and virtuous individual, he had escaped from being burnt to ashes. They then desired him to go with them and be their lover. As he had his passions well under control, he mildly declined their favour saying that "a mortal like him cannot have anything in sympathy with the celestials" and hence an alliance between them would be nothing but sheer foolishness even if not absolute madness.

Pleased with his courteous reply, the maidens blessed him with wisdom and state-craft and departed.



After their departure the ministers son also set out on his journey and soon reached Ujjain. Arriving at king Vikrama's court, he narrated to him his adventures in the temple and described the river of boiling water.

With a view to unravel the mystery of the river of boiling water and to know more of the celestial dames, Vikrama caused himself to be transported to the temple on the banks of the river Godavari.

When the maidens departed after their worship in the temple was over, Vikrama stealthily followed.

They reached the abode of the eight *Siddhas* whom they were serving, and Vikrama was also there, when they reached the presence of the *Siddhas*, he too went there. When the *Siddhas* noticed the damsels they noticed Vikrama too and were filled with surprise.

They asked him who he was and how he came thither. Hearing that he was the renowned Vikrama and that he had come there with the celestial damsels, they welcomed him to their abode and presented him with eight gems of wonderful virtues.

Questioned by Vikrama, they told him that

the river in the temple flowed from the locks of hair on Siva's head. Passing Siva's third eye the water became so heated.

Having thanked the *Siddhas* for their kindness and taken leave of them. Vikrama returned to Ujjain.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### VIKRAMA'S PASSING AWAY FROM THE MORTAL WORLD.

There lived a Brahmin named Ramakrishna-avadhani in a village near the city of Pallandupuri. Astrolgers consulting his horoscope said that the son born to him after a period of twelve years would be very famous in the world.

The Brahmin went on a tour of pilgrimage and was returning home after twelve years. Hastening to halt at the house of a potter, it chanced that he fell in love with the potter's daughter which resulted in the birth of a son named Salivahana to him.

The child grew into a strong and robust lad and instead of making pots and pans of mud began to make a large number of horses, elephants, soldiers, chariots and various weapons of warfare.

When he came of proper age it chanced that he became the minister of a certain king who was a vassal of Vikrama.

When his ruler desired to send the usual tribute to king Vikrama Salivahana stopped him

from doing it. He sent a challenge to Vikrama in his king's name to come and fight with him and establish his superiority over him before claiming tribute for him.

This challenge exasperated Vikrama who advanced against him to bring him to senses.

Expecting to meet an array of warriors, horses and elephants Vikrama saw only toys of those in clay arrayed against him.

Filled with surprise at this, he asked Batti whether their life period was over. On his replying in the affirmative, Vikrama caused his throne to be buried under the earth and went to meet Salivahana and his army of clay toys.

Waving his arm over the toys he changed them into real men, horses, elephants and weapons !! - These meeting Vikrama's forces cut them to pieces !!!!!

Discharging a discus, Salivahana severed Vikrama's head from the trunk and thus passed away this extraordinary ruler of Ujjain.

The ladies in Vikrama's harem ascended the funeral pyre and Batti, Vikrama's minister parted his soul from the body it was linked to by the power of *Yoga* he possessed, while the

Vamphire became once again the Brahmin priest in the former temple.

Salivahana succeeded Vikrama to the throne and rules for a thousand years as the suzerine lord of all kings !!!!!

THE END.



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